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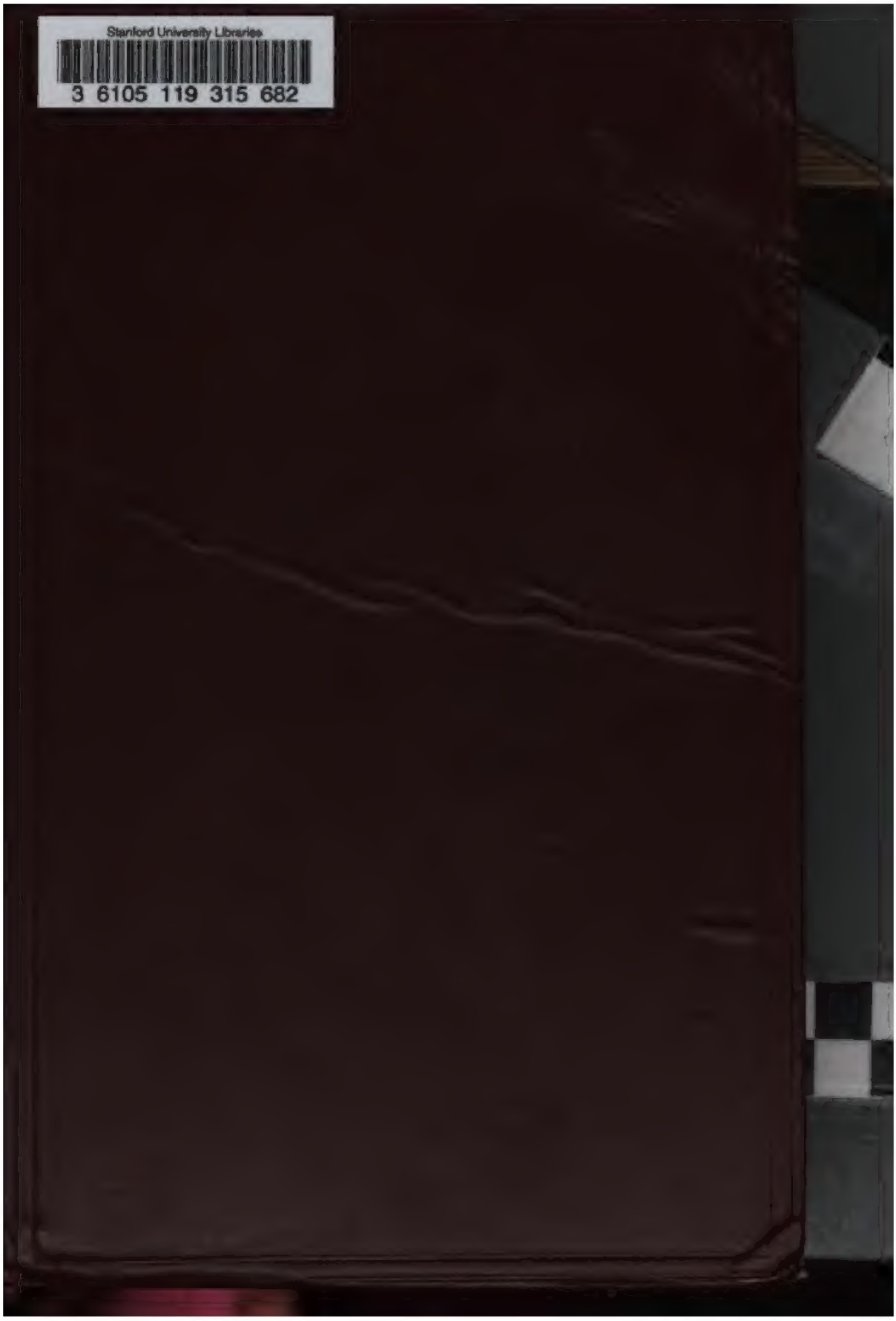
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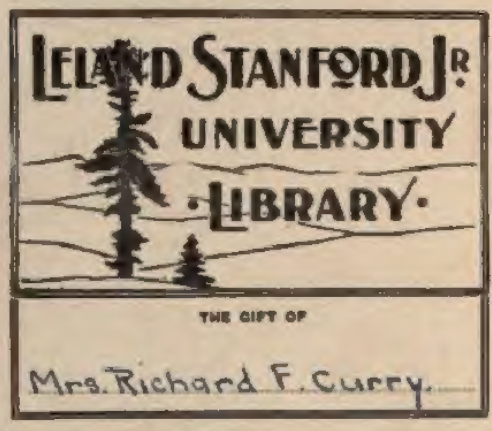
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# SPEECHES

*ON QUESTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY*

BY

# JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

EDITED BY

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

'BE JUST AND FEAR NOT'

SECOND EDITION

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# PREFACE.

THE speeches which have been selected for publication in these volumes possess a value, as examples of the art of public speaking, which no person will be likely to underrate. Those who may differ from Mr. Bright's theory of the public good will have no difficulty in acknowledging the clearness of his diction, the skill with which he arranges his arguments, the vigour of his style, the persuasiveness of his reasoning, and above all, the perfect candour and sincerity with which he expresses his political convictions.

It seems likely that the course of events in this country will lead those, who may desire to possess influence in the conduct of public affairs, to study the art of public speaking. If so, nothing which can be found in English literature will aid the aspirant after this great faculty more than the careful and reiterated perusal of the speeches contained in these volumes. Tried indeed by the effect produced upon

any audience by their easy flow and perfect clearness, or analysed by any of those systems of criticism which under the name of 'rhetoric' have been saved to us from the learning of the ancient world, these speeches would be admitted to satisfy either process.

This is not the occasion on which to point out the causes which confer so great an artistic value on these compositions; which give them now, and will give them hereafter, so high a place in English literature. At the present time nearly a hundred millions of the earth's inhabitants speak the English tongue. A century hence, and it will probably be the speech of nearly half the inhabitants of the globe. I think that no master of that language will occupy a loftier position than Mr. Bright; that no speaker will teach with greater exactness the noblest and rarest of the social arts, the art of clear and persuasive exposition. But before this art can be attained (so said the greatest critic that the world has known), it is necessary that the speaker should secure the sympathies of his audience, should convince them of his statesmanship, should show that he is free from any taint of self-interest or dissimulation. These conditions of public trust still form, as heretofore, in every country of free thought and free speech, the foundation of a good reputation and of personal influence. It is with the fact that such are the characteristics of my friend's eloquence, that I have been strongly impressed in collecting and editing the materials of these volumes.

Since the days of those men of renown who lived through the first half of the seventeenth century, when the liveliest religious feeling was joined to the loftiest patriotism, and men laboured for their conscience and their country, England has witnessed no political career like that of Cobden and Bright. Cobden's death was a great loss to his country, for it occurred at a time when England could ill spare a conscientious statesman. Nations, however, cannot be saved by the virtues, nor need they be lost by the vices, of their public men. But Cobden's death was an irreparable loss to his friends—most of all to the friend who had been, in an incessant struggle for public duty and truth, of one heart and of one purpose with him.

Those who have been familiar with Cobden's mind know how wide was his knowledge, how true was his judgment of political events. The vast majority of those who followed his public career had but a scanty acquaintance with the resources of his sagacity and foresight. He spoke to the people on a few subjects only. The wisdom of Free Trade; the necessity of Parliamentary Reform; the dangerous tendency of those laws which favour the accumulation of land in few hands; the urgent need for a system of national education; the mischief of the mere military spirit; the prudence of uniting communities by the multiplication of international interests; the abandonment of the policy of diplomatic and military intermeddling; the advocacy, in short, of the common good in place of a spurious patriotism, of

selfish, local, or class aims; formed the subject of Cobden's public utterances. But his intimate friends, and in particular his regular correspondents, were aware that his political criticism was as general as it was accurate. The loss then of his wise and lucid counsel was the greatest to the survivor of a personal and a political friendship which was continued uninterruptedly through so long and so active a career.

At the commencement of Mr. Bright's public life, the shortsighted selfishness of a landlords' parliament was afflicting the United Kingdom with a continuous dearth. Labour was starved, and capital was made unproductive by the Corn-laws. The country was tied to a system by which Great Britain and her Colonies deliberately chose the dearest market for their purchases. In the same spirit, the price of freights was wilfully heightened by the Navigation-laws. Important branches of home industry were crippled by prying, vexatious, and wasteful excises. And this system was conceived to be the highest wisdom; or at any rate, to be so invincible a necessity that it could not be avoided or altered without danger. The country, if it were to make its way, could make it only because other nations were servile imitators of our commercial policy, and, in the vain hope of retaliation, were hindering their own progress.

The foreign policy of Great Britain was suspicious and irritating, for it was secret, busy, and meddling, insolent to the weak, conciliatory, even truckling, to

the strong. The very name of diplomacy is and has been odious to English Liberals, for by means of it a reactionary Government could check domestic reforms, and hinder the community of nations indefinitely. The policy of the Foreign Office was constantly directed towards embittering, if not embroiling, the relations between this and other countries. It is difficult to account for these intrigues, except on the ground that successive Governments were anxious to maintain political and social anomalies at home, while they were affecting to support 'the balance of power' abroad. The abandonment of intervention in foreign politics was the beginning of agitation for domestic reforms.

Perhaps no part of the public administration was worse than that of India. The great Company had lost its monopoly of trade in the Eastern seas, but retained its administrative powers over the subject races and dependent princes of India. Its system of finance was wasteful and oppressive. Its policy was that of aggression and annexation. In practice, the Government was irresponsible. Nobody listened to Indian affairs in Parliament, except on rare occasions, or for party purposes. The Governor-General did as he pleased. The President of the Board of Control did as he pleased. If the reader wishes to see how the former acted, Mr. Cobden's pamphlet, 'How Wars are got up in India,' will enlighten him. If it be necessary to inquire what the policy of the latter might be, the disastrous and disgraceful Affghan War is an illustration. Never perhaps was

a war commenced more recklessly. It is certain that when loss and dishonour fell on the English arms, the statesmen who recommended and insisted on the war tried to screen themselves from just blame by the basest arts.

The internal resources of India were utterly neglected. The Company collected part of its revenue from a land-tax, levied in the worst shape. In order to secure an income through a monopoly, it constrained the cultivation of certain drugs for which there was a foreign demand; and neglected to encourage the cultivation of cotton, for which the home demand was wellnigh boundless, and to which the Indian supply might be made to correspond. The Company constructed neither road nor canal. It did nothing towards maintaining the means of communication which even the native governments had adopted. It suffered the ancient roads and tanks to fall into decay. It neglected to educate the native gentry, much more the people. In brief, the policy of the Company in dealing with India was the policy of Old Spain with her Transatlantic possessions, only that it was more jealous and illiberal.

Against these social and political evils, and many others which might be enumerated, a very small body of true and resolute statesmen arrayed themselves. Among these statesmen the most eminent were the two chiefs of the Anti-Corn-law agitation. Never did men lead a hope which seemed more forlorn. They had as opponents nearly the whole Upper House of Parliament, a powerful and compact party in the

Lower. The Established Church was, of course, against them. The London newspapers, at that time almost the only political power in the press, were against them. The 'educated' classes were against them. Many of the working people were unfriendly to them, for the Chartists believed that the repeal of the Corn-laws would lower the price of labour. After a long struggle they gained the day; for an accident, the Irish famine, rendered a change in the Corn-laws inevitable. But had it not been for the organization of the League, the accident would have had no effect; for it is a rule in the philosophy of politics that an accident is valuable only when the machinery for making use of the accident is at hand. Calamities never teach wisdom to fools, they render it possible that the wise should avail themselves of the emergency.

A similar calamity, long foreseen by prudent men, caused the political extinction of the East India Company. The joint action of the Board of Control and the Directors led to the Indian mutiny. The suppression of the Indian mutiny led to the suppression of the Leadenhall Street Divan. Another calamity, also foreseen by statesmen, the outbreak of the American Civil War, gave India commercial hope, and retrieved the finances which the Company's rule had thrown into hopeless disorder.

I have selected the speeches contained in these two volumes, with a view to supplying the public with the evidence on which Mr. Bright's friends assert his right to a place in the front rank of English

statesmen. I suppose that there is no better evidence of statesmanship than prescience; that no fuller confirmation of this evidence can be found than in the popular acceptance of those principles which were once unpopular and discredited. A short time since, Lord Derby said that Mr. Bright was the real leader of the Opposition. It is true that he has given great aid to that opposition which Lord Derby and his friends have often encountered, and by which, to their great discredit, but to their great advantage, they have been constantly defeated. If Lord Derby is in the right, Mr. Bright is the leader of the People, while his Lordship represents a party which is reckless because it is desperate. The policy which Mr. Bright has advocated in these pages, and throughout a quarter of a century, a policy from which he has never swerved, has at last been accepted by the nation, despite the constant resistance of Lord Derby and his friends. It embodies the national will, because it has attacked, and in many cases vanquished, institutions and laws which have become unpopular, because they have been manifestly mischievous and destructive. No one knows better how conservative and tolerant is public opinion in England towards traditional institutions, than Mr. Bright does; or how indifferent the nation is to attacks on an untenable practice and a bad law, until it awakens to the fact that the law or the practice is ruinous.

Mr. Bright's political opinions have not been adopted because they were popular. He was skil-

fully, and for a time successfully, maligned by Lord Palmerston, on account of his persevering resistance to the policy of the Russian War. But it is probable that the views he entertained at that time will find more enduring acceptance than those which Lord Palmerston and Lord Palmerston's colleagues promulgated, and that he has done more to deface that Moloch, 'the balance of power,' than any other man living. Shortly after the beginning of the Planters' War, almost all the upper, and many of the middle classes, sympathized with the Slave-owners' conspiracy. Everybody knows which side Mr. Bright took, and how judicious and far-sighted he was in taking it. But everybody should remember also how, when Mr. Bright pointed out the consequences likely to ensue from the cruise of the *Alabama*, he was insulted by Mr. Laird in the House of Commons; the Mr. Laird who launched the *Alabama*, who has been the means of creating bitter enmity between the people of this country and of the United States, and has contrived to invest the unlawful speculation of a shipbuilder with the dignity of an international difficulty, to make it the material for an unsettled diplomatic question.

There are many social and political reforms, destined, it may be hoped, to become matter of debate and action in a Reformed Parliament, towards the accomplishment of which Mr. Bright has powerfully contributed. There is that without which Reform is a fraud, the redistribution of seats; that without which it is a sham, the ballot; that without which

it is possibly a danger, a system of national education, which should be, if not compulsory, so cogently expedient that it cannot be rejected. There is the great question of the distribution of land, its occupancy, and its relief from that pestilent system of game preserving which robs the farmer of his profit and the people of their home supplies. There is the pacification of Ireland. The only consolation which can be gathered from the condition of that unhappy country is, that reforms, which are highly expedient in Great Britain, are vital in Ireland, and that they therefore become familiar to the public mind. There is the development of international amity and good-will, first between ourselves and the people of our own race, next between all nations. There is the recognition of public duty to inferior or subject races, a duty which was grievously transgressed before and after the Indian mutiny, and has been still more atrociously outraged in the Jamaica massacre. Upon these and similar matters, no man who wishes to deserve the reputation of a just and wise statesman,—in other words, to fulfil the highest and greatest functions which man can render to man,—can find a worthier study than the public career of an Englishman whose guiding principle throughout his whole life has been his favourite motto, 'Be just and fear not.'

I have divided the speeches contained in these volumes into groups. The materials for selection are so abundant, that I have been constrained to omit many a speech which is worthy of careful

perusal. I have naturally given prominence to those subjects with which Mr. Bright has been especially identified, as, for example, India, America, Ireland, and Parliamentary Reform. But nearly every topic of great public interest on which Mr. Bright has spoken is represented in these volumes.

A statement of the views entertained by an eminent politician, who wields a vast influence in the country, is always valuable. It is more valuable when the utterances are profound, consistent, candid. It is most valuable at a crisis when the people of these islands are invited to take part in a contest where the broad principles of truth, honour, and justice are arrayed on one side, and their victory is threatened by those false cries, those reckless calumnies, those impudent evasions which form the party weapons of desperate and unscrupulous men.

All the speeches in these volumes have been revised by Mr. Bright. The Editor is responsible for their selection, for this Preface, and for the Index at the close of the second volume.

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS.

OXFORD, *June* 30, 1868.

THE Second Edition of these volumes is an exact reprint of the first, certain obvious errors of the press only having been corrected.

OXFORD, *Dec.* 21, 1868.

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# INDIA.

# INDIA.

## I.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 3, 1853.

*From Hansard.*

[The ministerial measure for the government of India was introduced by Sir Charles Wood on June 3, 1853. The particulars of the Bill were as follows: The Government proposed that for the future the relations between the Directors and the Board of Control should be unchanged, but that the constitution of the former should be altered and its patronage curtailed. It reduced the number of the Members of the Court from twenty-four to eighteen, of whom twelve were to be elected as before, and six nominated by the Crown from Indian servants who had been ten years in the service of the Crown or the Company. One-third of this number was to go out every second year, but to be re-eligible. Nominations by favour were to be abolished. The governorship of Bengal was to be separated from the office of Governor-General. The legislative council was to be improved and enlarged, the number to be twelve. The Bill passed the House of Lords on June 13.]

I FEEL a considerable disadvantage in rising to address the House after having listened for upwards of five hours to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. But the question is one, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, of first-rate importance; and as I happen from a variety of circumstances to have paid some attention to it, and to have formed some strong opinions in regard to it, I am unwilling even that the Bill should be brought in, or that this opportunity should pass, without

saying something, which will be partly in reply to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and partly by way of comment on the plan which he has submitted to the House. There is, as it appears to me, great inconsistency between the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and that which he proposes should be done; because, really, if we take his speech as a true and faithful statement of the condition of India, and of the past proceedings of the Government in that country, our conviction must be that the right hon. Gentleman will be greatly to be blamed in making any alteration in that Government. At the same time, if it be not a faithful portraiture of the Government, and of its transactions in India, then what the right hon. Gentleman proposes to do in regard to the home administration of that country is altogether insufficient for the occasion. I cannot on the present occasion go into many of the details on which the right hon. Gentleman has touched; but the observations which I have to make will refer to matters of government, and those will be confined chiefly to the organisation of the home administration. I am not much surprised that the Government should have taken what I will call a very unsatisfactory course with regard to the measure they have propounded, because they evidently did not seem exactly to know what they ought to do from the very first moment that this question was brought before them. I do not allude to the whole of the Treasury bench, but I refer particularly to the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), because he was at the head of the Government when this question was first brought before them. Lord Broughton, then Sir John Hobhouse, was at that time the President of the Board of Control, and he was not in favour of a Committee to inquire into the past government and present condition of India. Shortly afterwards, however, it was considered by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) that it would be desirable to have such a Committee appointed. A Committee was appointed, and it sat.

But at the commencement of the present Session the noble Lord intimated very distinctly, in answer to a question which I put to him, and which seemed to make the noble Lord unnecessarily angry, that it was the intention of the Government to legislate, and in such a way as to leave the Indian Government almost entirely the same as it had hitherto been. ['No, no!'] Well, I thought that the noble Lord said so, and in corroboration of that I may mention that the noble Lord quoted—and I believe that it was the noble Lord's only authority—the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries), who considered that no material change was required in the constitution of the home Indian Government. Well, when the noble Lord made that announcement, considerable dissatisfaction was manifested on both sides of the House, some hon. Members speaking in favour of a delay of one, two, or three years, or declaring themselves strongly against the present constitution of the Indian Government. However, from that time to this, various rumours were afloat, and everybody was confident one week that there would be no legislation, or only a postponement; in another week it was thought that there was to be a very sweeping measure (which last report, I must say, I never believed); and the week after that people were again led to the conclusion that there would be a measure introduced such as the one this night submitted to the House. Again, it was understood so lately as last Saturday that there would be no legislation on the subject, excepting a mere temporary measure for a postponement. I confess that I was myself taken in by that announcement. On Monday the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. Danby Seymour) gave notice of a question on the same subject, and he was requested not to ask it till Tuesday. On Tuesday there was a Cabinet Council, and whether there was a change of opinion then I know not, but I presume that there was. The opinion that was confidently expressed on Saturday gave way to a new

opinion, and the noble Lord announced that legislation would be proceeded with immediately. All this indicates that there was a good deal of vacillation on the part of the Government. At last, however, has come the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control. There were some good things in it, no doubt. I do not suppose that any man could stand up, and go on speaking for five hours, without saying something that was useful. But as to the main question on which this matter rests, I do not believe that the plan which the Government proposes to substitute will be one particle better than that which exists at the present moment.

With regard to the question of patronage, I admit, so far as that goes, that the plan proposed by the right hon. Gentleman will be an improvement on the present system. But I do not understand that the particular arrangement of the covenanted service is to be broken up at all. That is a very important matter, because, although he might throw open the nominations to the Indian service to the free competition of all persons in this country, yet if, when these persons get out to India, they are to become a covenanted service, as that service now is constituted, and are to go on from beginning to end in a system of promotion by seniority—and they are to be under pretty much the same arrangement as at present—a great deal of the evil now existing will remain; and the continuance of such a body as that will form a great bar to what I am very anxious to see, namely, a very much wider employment of the most intelligent and able men amongst the native population.

The right hon. Gentleman has, in fact, made a long speech wholly in defence of the Indian Government; and I cannot avoid making some remarks upon what he has stated because I wholly dissent from a large portion of the observations which he has made. But the right hon. Gentleman, above all things, dreads that this matter

should be delayed. Now I will just touch upon that point. The right hon. Gentleman has said that he has not met any one who does not consider it highly desirable that the House should legislate upon the subject of the Government of India this year; and that it will be a great evil if such legislation is postponed. In support of this view he produces a private letter from Lord Dalhousie upon the subject. Now I do not consider such evidence as by any means conclusive, because the House knows that Lord Dalhousie has been connected with the system that now exists. That noble Earl is also surrounded by persons who are themselves interested in maintaining the present system. From his elevated position also in India—I do not mean his location at Simlah—but from his being by his station removed from the mass of the European population, and still more removed from the native population, I do not think it at all likely that Lord Dalhousie will be able to form a sounder opinion upon this question than persons who have never been in India. In my opinion, no evil can possibly arise from creating in the minds of the population of India a feeling that the question of Indian Government is considered by the House of Commons to be a grave and solemn question; and I solemnly believe that if the decision on the question be delayed for two years, so as to enable Parliament to make due inquiries as to the means of establishing a better form of government in India, it will create in the minds of all the intelligent natives of India a feeling of confidence and hope, and that whatever may be done by them in the way of agitation will be rather for the purpose of offering information in the most friendly and generous spirit, than of creating opposition to any Government legislation. However, the question of delay is one which the House in all probability will be called upon to decide on another occasion.

But passing from that subject, I now come to the prin-

ciple upon which the right hon. Gentleman founded his Motion. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman was throughout that of an advocate of the Indian Government, as at present constituted; and, if Mr. Melville had said everything that could possibly be dragged into the case, he could not have made it more clearly appear than the right hon. Gentleman has done that the Government of India has been uniformly worthy of the confidence of the country. My view of this matter, after a good deal of observation, is, that the Indian Government, composed of two branches, which the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to amalgamate into one, is a Government of secrecy and irresponsibility to a degree that should not be tolerated in a country like this, where we have a constitutional and Parliamentary Government. I have not the least idea in any observations which I may make either in this House or elsewhere of bringing a charge against the East India Company—that is to say, against any individual member of the Board of Directors, as if they were anxious to misgovern India. I never had any such suspicion. I believe that the twenty-four gentlemen who constitute the Board of Directors would act just about as well as any other twenty-four persons elected by the same process, acting under the same influences, and surrounded by the same difficulties—having to act with another and independent body—the Board of Control. Neither am I hostile to the Board of Control, because I think that the duty imposed upon it is greater than any such body can properly perform. The right hon. Gentleman, the enormous labours of whose office could not be accomplished by any one man, coming into office in December, and having to propose a new Government for India in the month of May or June, must have found it extremely difficult to make himself master of the question. But beyond this the House should bear in mind, that during the last thirty years there has been a new President of the Board of Control every two years. Nay, in the course of

last year there were no less than three Presidents of the Board of Control. Thus that Board seems framed in such a manner as to make it altogether impossible that any one man should be able to conduct it in the way which it ought to be conducted. Beyond this, the President of that Board has to act in conjunction with the Court of Directors. Without saying anything which would impute blame to any party, it must be obvious that two such bodies combined can never carry on the government of India wisely, and in accordance with those principles which have been found necessary in the government of this country. The right hon. Gentleman has been obliged to admit that the theory of the old Government of India was one which could not be defended, and that everybody considers it ridiculous and childish. I am not at all certain that the one that is going to be established is in any degree better. It was in 1784 that this form of government was established, amid the fight of factions. In 1813 it was continued for twenty-years longer, during a time when the country was involved in desperate hostilities with France. In 1833 another Bill, continuing that form of government, passed through Parliament immediately after the hurricane which carried the Reform Bill. All these circumstances rendered it difficult for the Government, however honestly disposed, to pass the best measure for the government of India. But all the difficulties which then existed appear to me wholly to have vanished. Never has any question come before Parliament more entirely free from a complication of that nature, or one which the House has the opportunity of more quietly and calmly considering, than the question now before them.

I should have been pleased if the right hon. Gentleman had given the House the testimony of some two or three persons on his own side of the question. But, as he has not done so, I will trouble the House by referring to some authorities in support of my own views. I will first refer to the

work of Mr. Campbell, which has already been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. It is a very interesting book, and gives a great deal of information. That writer says—

'The division of authority between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, the large number of directors, and the peculiar system by which measures are originated in the Court, sent for approval to the Board, then back again to the Court, and so on, render all deliverances very slow and difficult; and when a measure is discussed in India, the announcement that it has been referred to the Court of Directors is often regarded as an indefinite postponement. In fact, it is evident that (able and experienced as are many of the individual directors) twenty four directors in one place, and a Board of Control in another, are not likely very speedily to unite in one opinion upon any doubtful point.'

That, I think, is likely to be the opinion of any man on the Government of India. There is another authority to which I will refer, Mr. Kaye, who has also written a very good book. It was actually distributed by the Court of Directors; I have therefore a right to consider it a fair representation of their views of what was done, especially as the Chairman of the Court has given me a copy of the book. Mr. Kaye, in referring to the double Government which existed in Bengal in 1772, makes use of these expressions. When I first read them, I thought they were a quotation from my own speeches:—

'But enlightened as were the instructions thus issued to the supervisors, the supervision was wholly inadequate to the requirements of the case. The double Government, as I have shown, did not work well. It was altogether a sham and an imposture. It was soon to be demolished at a blow ..... The double Government had, by this time, fulfilled its mission. It had introduced an incredible amount of disorder and corruption into the State, and of poverty and wretchedness among the people, it had embarrassed our finances, and soiled our character, and was now to be openly recognised as a failure.'

This is only as to Bengal. The following are the words he uses in respect to the double Government at home:—

'In respect of all transactions with foreign Powers—all matters bearing upon questions of peace and war—the President of the Board of Control has authority to originate such measures as he and his colleagues in the Ministry may consider expedient. In such cases he acts presumedly in concert with the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors- a body composed of the

chairman, deputy-chairman, and senior member of the Court. The Secret Committee sign the despatches which emanate from the Board, but they have no power to withhold or to alter them. They have not even the power to record their dissent. In fact, the functions of the Committee are only those which, to use the words of a distinguished member of the Court (the late Mr. Tucker), who deplored the mystery and the mockery of a system which obscures responsibility and deludes public opinion, could as well be performed "by a secretary and a seal."'

Further on he says—

'In judging of responsibility, we should remember that the whole foreign policy of the East India Company is regulated by the Board of Control: that in the solution of the most vital questions—questions of peace and war—affecting the finances of the country, and, therefore, the means of internal improvement, the Court of Directors have no more power than the mayor and aldermen of any corporate town. India depends less on the will of the twenty-four than on one man's caprice—here to-day and gone to-morrow—knocked over by a gust of Parliamentary uncertainty the mistaken tactics of a leader, or negligence of a whipper-in. The past history of India is a history of revenue wasted and domestic improvement obstructed by war.'

This is very much what I complain of. I admit the right of the East India Company to complain of many things done by the Board of Control; and I am of opinion, that if the House left the two bodies to combat one another, they would at last come to an accurate perception of what they both are. The East India Company accused the Board of Control of making wars and squandering the revenue which the Company collected. But Mr. Kaye said that Mr. Tucker deplored the mystery and the mockery of a system which obscured responsibility and deluded public opinion. It is because of this concealment, of this delusion practised upon public opinion, of this evasion of public responsibility and Parliamentary control, that you have a state of things in India which the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles) has described, when he says that the Company manages the revenues, collects the taxes, and gets from 20,000,000*l.* to 30,000,000*l.* a-year, and nobody knows how much more. But, whatever it is, such is the system of foreign policy pursued by the Board of Control—that is to say, by the

gentlemen who drop down there for six or eight or twelve months, never beyond two years—that, whatever revenues are collected, they are squandered on unnecessary and ruinous wars, till the country is brought to a state of embarrassment and threatened bankruptcy. That is the real point which the House will have to consider.

With regard to some of the details of the Government plan, we should no doubt all agree: but this question of divided responsibility, of concealed responsibility, and of no responsibility whatever, that is the real pith of the matter. The House should take care not to be diverted from that question. [Mr. Mangles: 'Produce your own plan.'] An hon. Gentleman has asked me to produce my plan. I will not comply with that request, but will follow the example of a right hon. Gentleman, a great authority in this House, who once said, when similarly challenged, that he should produce his plan when he was called in. I believe that the plan before the House to-night was concocted by the Board of Control and the hon. Member for Guildford and his Colleagues; I shall, therefore, confine myself at present to the discussion of that plan. Some persons are disposed very much (at least I am afraid so) to undervalue the particular point which I am endeavouring to bring before the House; and they seem to fancy that it does not much matter what shall be the form of government in India, since the population of that country will always be in a condition of great impoverishment and much suffering; and that whatever is done must be done there, and that after all—after having conquered 100,000,000 of people—it is not in our power to interfere for the improvement of their condition. Mr. Kaye, in his book, commences the first chapters with a very depreciating account of the character of the Mogul Princes, with a view to show that the condition of the people of India was at least as unfavourable under them as under British rule. I will cite one or two cases from witnesses for whose

testimony the right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood) must have respect. Mr. Marshman is a gentleman who is well known as possessing a considerable amount of information on Indian affairs, and has, I presume, come over on purpose to give his evidence on the subject. He was editor of a newspaper which was generally considered throughout India to be the organ of the Government; in that newspaper, the *Friend of India*, bearing the date 1st April, 1852, the following statement appears:—

'No one has ever attempted to contradict the fact that the condition of the Bengal peasantry is almost as wretched and degraded as it is possible to conceive—living in the most miserable hovels, scarcely fit for a dog-kennel, covered with tattered rags and unable, in too many instances, to procure more than a single meal a-day for himself and family. The Bengal ryot knows nothing of the most ordinary comforts of life. We speak without exaggeration when we affirm, that if the real condition of those who raise the harvest, which yields between 3,000,000*l.* and 4,000,000*l.* a-year, was fully known, it would make the ears of one who heard thereof tingle.'

It has been said that in the Bengal Presidency the natives are in a better condition than in the other Presidencies; and I recollect that when I served on the Cotton Committee the evidence taken before it being confined to the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, it was then said that if evidence had been taken about the Bengal Presidency it would have appeared that the condition of the natives was better. But I believe that it is very much the same in all the Presidencies. I must say that it is my belief that if a country be found possessing a most fertile soil, and capable of bearing every variety of production, and that, notwithstanding, the people are in a state of extreme destitution and suffering, the chances are that there is some fundamental error in the government of that country. The people of India have been subjected by us, and how to govern them in an efficient and beneficial manner is one of the most important points for the consideration of the House. From the Report of the

Indian Cotton Committee it appears that nearly every witness —and the witnesses were nearly all servants of the Company —gave evidence as to the state of destitution in which the cultivators of the soil lived. They were in such an abject condition that they were obliged to give 40 or 50 per cent. to borrow money to enable them to put seed into the ground. I can, if it were necessary, bring any amount of evidence to prove the miserable condition of the cultivators, and that in many places they have been compelled to part with their personal ornaments. Gentlemen who have written upon their condition have drawn a frightful picture, and have represented the persons employed to collect the revenue as coming upon the unhappy cultivators like locusts, and devouring everything. With regard to the consumption of salt, looking at the *Friend of India*, of April 14, 1853, it appears that it is on the decline. In the year 1849–50, the consumption was 205,517 tons; in 1850–51, 186,410 tons; and in 1851–2, 146,069 tons. Thus, in the short period of three years, there has been a decrease in the consumption amounting to 59,448 tons, which will involve a loss to the revenue of 416,136*l.*[1] Salt is one of those articles that people in India will use as much of as they can afford, and the diminution in the consumption appears to me to be a decided proof of the declining condition of the population, and that must affect adversely the revenue of the Indian Government. Now there is another point to which the right hon. Gentleman has slightly alluded; it is connected with the administration of justice, and I will read from the *Friend of India* a case illustrative of the efficiency of the police. The statement is so extraordinary that it would be incredible but for the circumstance of its having appeared in such a respectable journal:—

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[1] The *Friend of India* was incorrect in this statement the real decline in the consumption of salt was about 12,000 tons.

'The affair itself is sufficiently uninteresting. A native Zemindar had, or fancied he had, some paper rights over certain lands occupied by a European planter, and, as a necessary consequence, sent a body of armed retainers to attack his factory. The European resisted in the same fashion by calling out his retainers. There was a pitched battle, and several persons were wounded, if not slain; while the Darogah, the appointed guardian of the peace, sat on the roof of a neighbouring hut and looked on with an interest, the keenness of which was probably not diminished by the fact of his own immunity from the pains and perils of the conflict. There has been a judicial investigation, and somebody will probably be punished, if not by actual sentence, by the necessary disbursement of fees and douceurs, but the evil will not be thereby suppressed or even abated. The incident, trifling as it may appear—and the fact that it is trifling is no slight evidence of a disorganised state of society—is an epitome in small type of our Bengal police history. On all sides, and in every instance, we have the same picture—great offences, the police indifferent or inefficient, judicial investigations protracted till the sufferers regret that they did not patiently endure the injury, and somebody punished, but no visible abatement of the crime. The fact is, and it is beginning at last to be acknowledged everywhere, except perhaps at home, that Bengal does not need so much a "reform" or reorganisation of the police, as a police, a body of some kind, specially organised for the preservation of order. Why the change is so long postponed, no one, not familiar with the *arcana* of Leadenhall-street and Cannon row, can readily explain.'

Mr. Marshman uses the expression, 'the incident, trifling as it may appear;' but I will ask the House if they can conceive a state of society in a country under the Government of England where a scene of violence such as has been described could be considered trifling?

The right hon. Gentleman has, while admitting that the want of roads in some districts of India is a great evil, endeavoured to show that a great deal has been done to remedy the deficiency, and that on some roads the mails travel as fast as ten miles an hour. Now, I believe that if the speed were taken at five miles an hour, it would be nearer the truth; and I will beg the House to excuse me if I read another extract from the *Friend of India* of April 14, 1853:—

'The Grand Trunk, however, is the only road upon which a good speed has been attained, remarks being attached to all of the remainder strongly indicative of the want of improved means of communication. From Shergotty to Gyah, and Gyah to Patna, for instance, the pace is four miles and a half an

hour, but then "the road is cutcha, and the slightest shower of rain renders it puddly and impracticable for speedy transit." From Patna to Benares the official account is the same, but the rate increases at one stage to five miles and a half. The southern roads are, however, in the worst condition, the mails travelling to Jelazore at three miles an hour, or less than a groom can walk; and even between Calcutta and Barsaet the rate rises to only four miles and a half an hour, while everywhere we have such notices as "road intersected by numerous unbridged rivers and nullahs," "road has not been repaired for these many years," "road not repaired for years," the "road in so bad a state, and so much intersected by rivers and nullahs, that no great improvement in the speed of the mails can be effected." And yet the surplus Ferry Funds might, one would think, if economically administered, be sufficient to pay at least for the maintenance of the roads already in existence. New roads, we fear, are hopeless until Parliament fixes a *minimum*, which must be expended on them; and even then it may be allowed to accumulate, as the Parliamentary grant for education has done at Madras.'

The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the subject of irrigation; and I hold in my hand an extract from the Report of the Commission which inquired into the subject. The Report states that—

'The loss of revenue by the famine of 1832–33 is estimated at least at 1,000,000*l.* sterling; the loss of property at a far greater amount; of life, at 200,000 or 300,000, and of cattle, at 100,000 at the lowest, in Guntoor alone, besides the ruin of 70,000 houses. The famine of the Northern Circars in 1833, and that of the north-western provinces of India at a later period, prove with irresistible force that irrigation in this country is properly a question, not of profit, but of existence.'

The right hon. Gentleman has also quoted from a Report by Colonel Cotton on the subject of the embankment of the Kistna. Now, the embankment of the Kistna has been recommended as far back as the year 1792, and from that time has been repeatedly brought forward. The whole estimate for it is but 155,000*l.*, and it was not until September, 1852, that the preliminary operations were commenced. I find this officer stating with respect to the district of Rajamundry, that if a particular improvement that had been recommended above twenty years ago had been carried out, it would have saved the lives of upwards of 100,000 persons who perished in the famine of 1837. I say that such facts as these are a justification of stronger language than any in

which I have indulged in reference to the neglect of the Indian Government whether in this House or out of it. The right hon. gentleman candidly informs us that this very embankment has been recently stopped by order of the Madras Government, because the money was wanted for other purposes—the Burmese war, no doubt. In the year 1849 it was reported that Colonel Cotton wrote a despatch to the Madras Government, in which, after mentioning facts connected with the famines, he insisted, in strong and indignant language, that the improvements should go on. I believe that there was an allusion in the letter to the awkward look these things would have, pending the discussions on the Government of India, and I understand that it was agreed that the original letter, which countermanded the improvements, should be withdrawn, and that then the remonstrance from Colonel Cotton should also be withdrawn. A gentleman who has been in the Company's service, and who has for some time been engaged in improvements, chiefly in irrigation, writes in a private letter as follows:—

'From my late investigations on this subject, I feel convinced that the state of our communications is the most important subject which calls for consideration. I reckon that India now pays, for want of cheap transit, a sum equal to the whole of the taxes; so that by reducing its cost to a tenth, which might easily be done, we should as good as abolish all taxes. I trust the Committees in England are going on well, in spite of the unbecoming efforts which have been made to circumscribe and quash their proceedings. Woe be to India, indeed, if this opportunity is lost! Much will depend upon you—

(the letter was not addressed to myself)—

and others now in England, who know India, and have a single eye to its welfare. It behoves you to do your utmost to improve this most critical time, and may God in his mercy overrule all the efforts of man for its good! What abominations, villanies, and idolatries there still are in our system! Is there no hope, no possibility, of infusing a little fresh blood from some purer source into these bodies?

(the ruling authorities).

It is quite clear that no radical improvement can take place till some influences can be applied to stimulate our rulers to more healthy, wholesome

action, health can never be looked for in a body constituted as the Court of Directors now is; nothing but torpid disease can be expected as matters now stand.'

With respect to the administration of justice, I shall not go at any length into that subject, because I hope it will be taken up by some other Gentleman much more competent than myself, and I trust that a sufficient answer will be given to what has been stated by the right hon. Gentleman. However, as far as I am able to understand, there appears to be throughout the whole of India, on the part of the European population, an absolute terror of coming under the Company's Courts for any object whatever. Within the last fortnight I have had a conversation with a gentleman who has seen a long period of service in India, and he declared it was hopeless to expect that Englishmen would ever invest their property in India under any circumstances which placed their interests at the disposal of those courts of justice. That is one reason why there appears no increase in the number of Europeans or Englishmen who settle in the interior of India for the purpose of investing their capital there. The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to make an excuse on the ground that the Law Commission had done nothing. I was not in the House when the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) brought forward the Bill of 1833, but I understand it was stated that the Law Commission was to do wonders; yet now we have the evidence of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control, that the Report of the Law Commission has ever since been going backwards and forwards, like an unsettled spirit, between this country and India. Mr. Cameron, in his evidence, said (I suppose it is slumbering somewhere on the shelves in the East India House) that the Court of Directors actually sneered at the propositions of their officers for enactments of any kind, and that it was evidently their object to gradually extinguish the Commission altogether. Yet the evidence of

Mr. Cameron went to show the extraordinary complication and confusion of the law and law administration over all the British dominions in India. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control also referred to the statistics laid before the public; but I want to know why Colonel Sykes' statistical tables are not before the House. They are at the India House; but a journey to Leadenhall-street seems to be as long as one to India, and one can as soon get a communication by the overland mail as any information from the India House. What did Colonel Sykes say, with respect to a subject referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, who had given the House to suppose that a great deal had been done in respect to improvements in India? Colonel Sykes stated that in fifteen years, from 1838 to 1852, the average expenditure throughout the whole of India on public works, including roads, bridges, tanks, and canals, was 299,732*l.* The north-west appeared to be the pet district; and in 1851 the total expenditure was 334,000*l.*, of which the north-west district had 240,000*l.* In 1852 the estimate was 693,000*l.*, of which the north-west district was to have 492,000*l.*, leaving only 94,000*l.* in 1851, and 201,000*l.* in 1852, for public works of all kinds in the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, with a population of 70,000,000 souls. The right hon. Gentleman then referred to the exports from this country, and the increase of trade with India; and a kindred subject to that was the mode in which Englishmen settle in India. What I want to show is, that the reason why so little is done with India by Englishmen is, that there does not exist in that country the same security for their investments as in almost every other country in the world. I recollect receiving from Mr. Mackay, who was sent out by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, a letter expressing his amazement on finding that in the interior of India an Englishman was hardly known, unless he now and then made his appearance as a tax collector. The following

Return shows in what small numbers Europeans resort to India:—

'British-born subjects in India not in the service of the Queen or the Company —

| | |
|---|---|
| Bengal | 6,749 |
| Madras | 1,661 |
| Bombay | 1,596 |
| | 10,006 |

'In the interior of the country, engaged in agriculture or manufactures —

| | |
|---|---|
| Bengal | 273 |
| Madras | 37 |
| Bombay | 7 |
| | 317' |

I cannot believe, if the United States had been the possessors of India, but that where there are tens of Europeans now in that country there would have been, not hundreds, but thousands of the people of America. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the exports to India, and wanted to show how large they were. Certainly they have increased very much, because they started from nothing at all. Before the opening of the trade, the Court of Proprietors, by resolution, declared that it was quite a delusion to suppose it possible to increase the trade with India. In 1850 the total exports to India from Great Britain and Ireland were 8,024,000*l.*, of which cotton goods alone amounted to 5,220,000*l.*, leaving 2,804,000*l.* for the total exports from Great Britain and Ireland upon all other branches of industry other than cotton. Now, let the House make a comparison with another country, one with which a moderately fair comparison might be made. Brazil has a population of 7,500,000 souls, half of whom are reckoned to be slaves, yet the consumption of British goods is greater in Brazil, in proportion to the population, than in India—the former country, with a population of 7,500,000, taking British goods to the amount of 2,500,000*l.* If India took but half the quantity of our exports that Brazil did in proportion to her population, she would take more than five times what she now takes. Yet Brazil is a country upon

which we have imposed the payment of exorbitant duties, which we have almost debarred from trading with us by an absurd monopoly in sugar, while India is a country entirely under our own government, and which, we are told, is enjoying the greatest possible blessings under the present administration, compared with what it enjoyed under its former rulers. Our exports to India in 1814 were 826,000*l.*; in 1832 they were 3,600,000*l.*; in 1843 they were 6,500,000*l.*; and in 1850 they were 8,000,000*l.* India consumes our exports at the rate of 1*s.* 3*d.* per head; whilst in South America, including the whole of the slave population, the consumption per head is 8*s.* 8*d.* These are facts which the right hon. Baronet is bound to pay serious attention to. For myself, representing, as I do, one of our great seats of manufacturing industry, I feel myself doubly called upon to lose no opportunity of bringing such facts before the House, satisfied as I am that there is no Member of this House so obtuse as not to comprehend how materially the great manufacturing interests of this country are concerned in the question—what shall be the future Government of India?

Another subject requiring close attention on the part of Parliament is the employment of the natives of India in the service of the Government. The right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay), in proposing the Indian Bill of 1833, had dwelt on one of its clauses, which provided that neither colour, nor caste, nor religion, nor place of birth, should be a bar to the employment of persons by the Government; whereas, as matter of fact, from that time to this, no person in India has been so employed, who might not have been equally employed before that clause was enacted; and, from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control, that it is proposed to keep up the covenanted service system, it is clear that this most objection-

able and most offensive state of things is to continue. Mr. Cameron, a gentleman thoroughly versed in the subject, as fourth member of Council in India, President of the Indian Law Commission, and of the Council of Education for Bengal —what does he say on this point? He says—

'The statute of 1833 made the natives of India eligible to all offices under the Company But during the twenty years that have since elapsed, not one of the natives has been appointed to any office except such as they were eligible to before the statute. It is not, however, of this omission that I should feel justified in complaining, if the Company had shown any disposition to make the natives fit, by the highest European education, for admission to their covenanted service. Their disposition, as far as it can be devised, is of the opposite kind.

'When four students (added Mr. Cameron) were sent to London from the Medical College of Calcutta, under the sanction of Lord Hardinge, in Council, to complete their professional education, the Court of Directors expressed their dissatisfaction, and when a plan for establishing a University at Calcutta, which had been prepared by the Council of Education, was recommended to their adoption by Lord Hardinge, in Council, they answered that the project was premature. As to the Law Commission, I am afraid that the Court of Directors have been accustomed to think of it only with the intention of procuring its abolition.'

Under the Act of 1833 the natives of India were declared to be eligible to any office under the Company. No native has, in the twenty years which have since elapsed, been appointed to any office in pursuance of that clause which he might not have held before the Bill passed, or had it never passed at all. There might not, perhaps, have been so much reason to complain of this circumstance, had the Government of India meanwhile shown a disposition to qualify the natives for the covenanted service; but the fact is that the Government has, on the contrary, manifested a disposition of a totally opposite character. The House must be very cautious not to adopt the glossed and burnished statement of the right hon. Gentleman as exhibiting the real state of things in India; for it is essential, in the highest degree, that in the present critical juncture of things the whole truth should be known. The right hon. Baronet, towards the close of his speech, has gone into

the subject of education, and not so much into that of ecclesiastical establishments in India, but somewhat into that of religion. Now, with reference to education, so far as can be gathered from the Returns before the House—I have sought to obtain Returns of a more specific character, but to no purpose, having received the usual answer in these matters, that there was no time for preparing them—but from the Returns we have before us I find that while the Government has overthrown almost entirely that native education which had subsisted throughout the country so universally that a schoolmaster was as regular a feature in every village as the 'potail' or head man, it has done next to nothing to supply the deficiency which has been created, or to substitute a better system. Out of a population of 100,000,000 natives we instruct but 25,000 children; out of a gross revenue of 29,000,000*l.* sterling, extracted from that population, we spend but 66,000*l.* in their education. In India, let it be borne in mind, the people are not in the position with regard to providing for their own education which the people of this country enjoy, and the education which they have provided themselves with, the Government has taken from them, supplying no adequate system in its place. The people of India are in a state of poverty, and of decay, unexampled in the annals of the country under their native rulers. From their poverty the Government wrings a gross revenue of more than 29,000,000*l.* sterling, and out of that 29,000,000*l.*, return to them 66,000*l.* per annum for the purposes of education!

What is our ecclesiastical establishment in India? Three bishops and a proportionate number of clergy, costing no less than 101,000*l.* a-year for the sole use of between 50,000 and 60,000 Europeans, nearly one-half of whom, moreover—taking the army—are Roman Catholics. I might add, that in India, the Government showed the same discrimination of which the noble Member for the City of London (Lord

J. Russell) seemed to approve so much the other night, for, although they give to one Protestant bishop 4,000*l.* a-year, with 1,200*l.* a-year more for expenses and a ship at his disposal, and to two other Protestant bishops between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* a-year, they give to the Roman Catholic bishop a paltry sum of about 250*l.* a-year. The East India Company are not, perhaps, herein so much to blame, seeing that they do but follow the example of what is going on in this country.

There is another question—perhaps the most important of all—the question of Indian finance, which, somehow or other, the right hon. Baronet has got over in so very lame a manner, in so particularly confused a style, that had I not known something of the matter previously, I should have learnt very little from the right hon. Baronet's statement. A former Director of the East India Company has, on this subject, issued a book—of course, in defence of the Company. Here are two or three facts extracted from this book:—From 1835 to 1851—sixteen years—the entire net taxation of India has produced 340,756,000*l.*; the expenditure on the Government in the same period having been 341,676,000*l.*—an amount somewhat in excess of the revenue. During these sixteen years there has been also expended on public works of all kinds 5,000,000*l.*, and there has been paid, in dividends, to the proprietors of East India stock, 10,080,000*l.*; making a total expenditure of 356,756,000*l.* In the same period the Company has contracted loans to the extent of 16,000,000*l.*; every farthing of which has gone to improvements, the stated extent of which I believe to have been greatly magnified, and to pay the amiable ladies and gentlemen whose votes return to Leadenhall-street those immaculate Directors whom the Government seems so desirous of cherishing. All expenditure for improvements of every kind, and all dividends to stockholders, have been paid from loans contracted during the last sixteen years; so that the whole revenue has been expended, leaving nothing for improvements and nothing for

the Company's dividends. This seems to me a formidable, an alarming state of things.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Indian debt coming upon the people of this country, expressing the opinion that if the Government of India were transferred to the Crown—which assuredly it ought to be—the debt ought so to be transferred. The debt is not in the present Budget, indeed, but it will certainly come before the House. I have already referred to a memorable speech of the late Sir Robert Peel on this subject, in 1842, just after he had come into office, and when, finding the country left by the Whigs with an Exchequer peculiarly discouraging to a Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was about to propose that temporary income-tax which has since become permanent. He said, after referring to the affairs of Canada and China—

"For the purpose of bringing before the House a full and complete view of our financial position, as I promised to do, I feel it to be my duty to refer to a subject which has of late occupied little attention in the House, but which I think might, with advantage to the public, have attracted more of their regard—I refer to the state of Indian finance, a subject which formerly used to be thought not unworthy of the consideration of this House. I am quite aware that there may appear to be no direct and immediate connexion between the finances of India and those of this country; but that would be a superficial view of our relations with India which should omit the consideration of this subject. Depend upon it, if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support, and the collateral and indirect effect of disorders in Indian finances would be felt extensively in this country. Sir, I am sorry to say that Indian finance offers no consolation for the state of finance in this country. I hold in my hand an account of the finances of India, which I have every reason to believe is a correct one. It is made up one month later than our own accounts—to the 5th of May. It states the gross revenue of India, with the charges on it; the interest of the debt; the surplus revenue, and the charges paid on it in England; and there are two columns which contain the net surplus and the net deficit. In the year ending May, 1836 there was a surplus of 1,520,000*l.* from the Indian revenue. In the year ending the 5th of May, 1837, there was a surplus of 1,100,000*l.*, which was reduced rapidly in the year ending May, 1838, to one of 620,000*l.* In the year ending the 5th of May, 1839, the surplus fell to 29,000*l.*; in the year ending the 5th of May, 1840, the balance of the account changed, and so far from there being any surplus the deficit on the Indian revenue was 1,414,000*l.* I am afraid I cannot calculate the deficit for the year ending May, 1841, though it depends

at present partly on estimate, at much less than 2,334,000*l.* The House, then, will bear in mind, that in fulfilment of the duty I have undertaken, I present to them the deficit in this country for the current year to the amount of 2,350,000*l.*, with a certain prospect of a deficit for the next year to the amount of at least 2,470,000*l.*, independently of the increase to be expected on account of China and Affghanistan, and that in India, that great portion of our Empire, I show a deficit on the two last years which will probably not be less than 4,700,000*l.*'—[*3 Hansard*, lxi. 428–9.]

Now, this deficit has in the period since 1842 been growing every year, with the exception of two years, when, from accidental and precarious circumstances, a surplus of between 300,000*l.* and 400,000*l.* was made out. The course of deficit has now, however, been resumed, and there is probably no one in this House or in the country but the right hon. President of the Board of Control, who does not perceive that the Burmese war will materially aggravate the amount of that deficit. Where is this to end? When the Board of Control was first established, the debt was 8,000,000*l.*; in 1825 it was 25,000,000*l.*; in 1829 it was 34,000,000*l.*; in 1836, 37,000,000*l.*; in 1843, 36,000,000*l.*; in 1849, 44,000,000*l.*; in 1853, 47,000,000*l.*; and now, including the bond debt at home and the debt in India, it is about 51,000,000*l.* The military expenditure of India has increased since the last Charter Act from 8,000,000*l.* a-year to more than 12,000,000*l.* a-year, and now forms no less than 56 per cent. of the whole expenditure. I believe that if the Indian Government would endeavour to improve the condition of the people by attending to economic principles, by establishing better means of communication, by promoting irrigation, and by affording facilities for education, the Indian population would at once be convinced that there was a feeling of sympathy entertained towards them on the part of their rulers and conquerors, and the idea—which I believe prevails very extensively—that we held India more with the object of extorting taxation than of benefiting the people, would speedily be removed.

When I come to consider the amount of the revenue, and

its pressure upon the population, I think I can show a state of things existing in India which cannot be paralleled in any other country in the world. The evidence of Mr. Davies and Mr. Stewart, collectors in Guzerat, shows that in that district the actual taxation varies from 60 to 90 per cent. upon the gross produce of the soil. Mr. Campbell calculates the gross revenue of India at about 27,000,000*l.*; and Mr. Kaye, a recent authority, who, I presume, wrote his book at the India House, states that the gross revenue was 29,000,000*l.* The land revenue is 12,000,000*l.* or 13,000,000*l.*; and although the Government took, or intended to take, all the rent, it is not half enough for them, and they are obliged to take as much more from other sources in order to enable them to maintain their establishments. I mention this fact to show the enormous expense of the Indian Government, and the impossibility of avoiding a great and dangerous financial crisis unless some alteration is made in the present system. Mr. Campbell, speaking of the Indian revenues under the Mogul Princes, says—

'The value of food, labour, &c., seems to have been much the same as now—that is, infinitely cheaper than in Europe; and, certainly, in comparison to the price of labour and all articles of consumption, the revenue of the Moguls must have been more effective than that of any modern State—I mean that it enabled them to command more men and luxuries, and to have a greater surplus.'

I would ask the House to imagine that all steam engines, and all applications of mechanical power, were banished from this country; that we were utterly dependent upon mere manual labour. What would you think if the Chancellor of the Exchequer, under such circumstances, endeavoured to levy the same taxation which is now borne by the country? From one end of India to the other, with very trifling exceptions, there is no such thing as a steam engine; but this poor population, without a steam engine, without anything like first-rate tools, are called upon to bear, I will venture to say, the very heaviest taxation under which any people ever

suffered with the same means of paying it. Yet the whole of this money, raised from so poor a population, which would in India buy four times as much labour, and four times as much of the productions of the country, as it would obtain in England, is not enough to keep up the establishments of the Government; for during the last sixteen years the Indian Government has borrowed 16,000,000*l.* to pay the dividends to the proprietors in England.

The opium question has been alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood). I must say I do not know any one connected with China, or at all acquainted with the subject, who is not of opinion that the opium revenue is very near its termination. Even the favourite authority of the President of the Board of Control, Mr. Marshman, declared his opinion that India was on the verge of a great financial crisis. Whether the present Chinese Government retains its power, or the insurgents be successful and a new dynasty be established, the scruple against the importation of opium into China from India having once been removed, the transition to the growth of the drug in China is very easy, and there can scarcely be a doubt that opium will soon be as extensively cultivated in that country as ever it was in India. This might very soon produce a loss of 3,000,000*l.* of revenue to the East India Company. There has already been an annual deficit in the revenues of the East India Company for the last fifteen years; they have to bear the cost of a Burmese war; and the annexation of new territory will only bring upon them an increased charge, for Pegu will probably never repay its expenses, and yet they have the prospect of losing 3,000,000*l.* of their revenue within a very few years. Now, what would the Chancellor of the Exchequer say if the President of the Board of Control came to that House and proposed to raise a loan upon the credit of this country for the purpose of maintaining our territory in India? Would it not be better at once to ascertain whether the principles and policy on which we have hitherto proceeded

have not been faulty? Should we not rather endeavour to reduce our expenditure, to employ cheaper labour, to increase the means of communication in India, which would enable us to dispense with a portion of our troops, and to make it a rule that the Governor-General should have more honour when he came home, for not having extended by an acre the territory of our Indian possessions, than if he had added a province or a kingdom to them?

The plan proposed by the President of the Board of Control appears to me very closely to resemble that which exists at present. The result, so far as regards the real question, about which the public are most interested, is this, that the twenty-four gentlemen who are directors of the East India Company are, by a process of self-immolation, to be reduced to fifteen. I think this reduction will be one of the most affecting scenes in the history of the Government of India. As the East India Company keep a writer to record their history, I hope they also keep an artist to give us an historical painting of this great event. There we shall see the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles), the hon. Member for Honiton (Sir J. W. Hogg), one of the hon. Members for the City of London, and the other directors, meeting together, and looking much like shipwrecked men in a boat casting lots who should be thrown overboard. To the fifteen directors who are to remain, three others are to be added, and the result will be that, instead of having twenty-four gentlemen sitting in Leadenhall-street, to manage the affairs in India, there will be eighteen. The present constituency is so bad that nothing the President of the Board of Control can do can make it worse; but as that right hon. Gentleman finds it impossible to make it better, he lets the constituency remain as it was. The right hon. Baronet proposes that the Crown should appoint six members of the Board who have been at least ten years in India, so that there may at all events be that number of gentlemen at the

Board fit for the responsible office in which they are placed. But this is an admission that the remaining twelve members of the Board are not fit for their office. They have two ingredients—the one wholesome, the other poisonous; but there are two drops of poison to one of wholesome nutriment. The right hon. Gentleman mixes them together, and then wants Parliament and the country to believe that he has proposed a great measure.

As regards the right hon. Gentleman's speech, I must say that I have never heard so great a one—I mean as to length—where the result, so far as the real thing about which people wish to know, was so little. The twelve gentlemen appointed by the present constituency are degraded already by the right hon. Gentleman's declaration, that they are not elected in a satisfactory manner, and that they are not fit persons for the government of India. They are, in fact, bankers and brewers, and men of all sorts, in the City of London, who find it their interest to get into the Court of Directors—no matter by what channel—because it adds to the business of their bank, or whatever else may be the undertaking in which they are engaged; but who have no special qualification for the government of India. If the Government thinks it right to have six good directors, let them abolish the twelve bad ones. Then it appears that the Secret Department is to be retained. Speaking of this, Mr. Kaye, quoting the authority of Mr. Tucker, a distinguished director, said it was no more than a secretary and a seal. Next comes a most extraordinary proposition. Hitherto the directors have undergone all the hardship of governing India for 300*l.* a-year; but the right hon. Gentleman now proposes to raise their wages by 4*l.* per week each. I must say, that if this body is to be salaried at all, and is not to have the profit of the patronage enjoyed by the present Government, nothing can be worse economy than this, with a view to obtaining a body which shall command the respect, and have the amount of

influence, requisite for conducting the Government of India. Sixteen of the directors, receiving 500*l.* a-year each—why, they would have to pay their clerks much more!—and the chairman and the deputy-chairman 1,000*l.* a-year each. The whole of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme seems to bear the marks of—I am almost afraid to say what; but he seems to have tried to please every one in framing his great proposition, and at last has landed the House in a sort of half measure, which neither the East India Company nor India wants. If I had made a speech such as the right hon. Gentleman has delivered, and believed what he said, I would leave the Indian Government as it is; but if I thought it necessary to alter the Government, I would do so on principle essentially. The right hon. Gentleman is afraid of bringing the Government of India under the authority of the Crown. What, I should like to know, would have been done if India had been conquered by the troops of the Crown? We should then never have sent some thirty men into a bye-street of London to distribute patronage and govern a great country. The Government of India would then have been made a department of the Government, with a Council and a Minister of State. But it appears that the old system of hocus-pocus is still to be carried on.

This is no question of Manchester against Essex—of town against country—of Church against Nonconformity. It is a question in which we all have an interest, and in which our children may be more deeply interested than we are ourselves. Should anything go wrong with the finances, we must bear the burden; or should the people of India by our treatment be goaded into insurrection, we must reconquer the country, or be ignominiously driven out of it. I will not be a party to a state of things which might lead to the writing of a narrative like this on the history of our relations with that empire. Let the House utterly disregard the predictions of mischief likely to result from such a change in the Government of

India as that which I advocate. When the trade was thrown open, and the Company was deprived of the monopoly of carrying, they said the Chinese would poison the tea. There is nothing too outrageous or ridiculous for the Company to say in order to prevent the Legislature from placing affairs on a more honest footing. I object to the Bill, because —as the right hon. Gentleman admitted—it maintains a double Government. In the unstatesmanlike course which the right hon. Gentleman is pursuing, he will, no doubt, be especially backed by the noble Lord the Member for London. I only wish that some of the younger blood in the Cabinet might have had their way upon this question. Nothing can induce me to believe, after the evidence which is before the public, that this measure has the approbation of an united Cabinet. It is not possible that thirteen sensible gentlemen, who have any pretensions to form a Cabinet, could agree to a measure of this nature. I am more anxious than I can express that Parliament should legislate rightly in this matter. Let us act so at this juncture that it may be said of us hereafter—that whatever crimes England originally committed in conquering India, she at least made the best of her position by governing the country as wisely as possible, and left the records and traces of a humane and liberal sway.

I recollect having heard the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston) deliver in this House one of the best speeches I ever listened to. On that occasion the noble Lord gloried in the proud name of England, and, pointing to the security with which an Englishman might travel abroad, he triumphed in the idea that his countrymen might exclaim, in the spirit of the ancient Roman, *Civis Romanus sum*. Let us not resemble the Romans merely in our national privileges and personal security. The Romans were great conquerors, but where they conquered, they governed wisely. The nations they conquered were impressed so indelibly with the intellectual character of their masters, that, after fourteen

centuries of decadence, the traces of civilisation are still distinguishable. Why should not we act a similar part in India? There never was a more docile people, never a more tractable nation. The opportunity is present, and the power is not wanting. Let us abandon the policy of aggression, and confine ourselves to a territory ten times the size of France, with a population four times as numerous as that of the United Kingdom. Surely that is enough to satisfy the most gluttonous appetite for glory and supremacy. Educate the people of India, govern them wisely, and gradually the distinctions of caste will disappear, and they will look upon us rather as benefactors than as conquerors. And if we desire to see Christianity, in some form, professed in that country, we shall sooner attain our object by setting the example of a high-toned Christian morality, than by any other means we can employ.

# INDIA.

## II.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 24, 1858.

*From Hansard.*

[After the suppression of the Indian mutiny, Lord Palmerston's Government determined to introduce a Bill the object of which was to place the possessions of the East India Company under the direct authority of the Crown. This Bill was introduced by Lord Palmerston on February 12. But the Government fell a few days afterwards, on the Conspiracy Bill, and Lord Palmerston's Bill was withdrawn. On March 26 the new Government introduced their own Bill, which was known as the India Bill No. 2. The chief peculiarity of this Bill was that five members in the proposed council of eighteen should be chosen by the constituencies of the following cities:—London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast. The scheme was unpopular, and Lord Russell proposed that it should be withdrawn, and that resolutions should be passed in a Committee of the whole House, the acceptance of which might prove a guide to the proceedings of the Government. The suggestion was accepted by Mr. Disraeli, and in consequence India Bill No. 3 was brought in, and read a second time on June 24.]

I DO not rise for the purpose of opposing the second reading of this Bill—on the contrary, if any hon. Member thinks proper to divide the House upon it, I shall vote with the noble Lord. I must say, however, that there are many clauses in the Bill to which I entertain serious objections. Some of them will, I hope, be amended as the Bill passes through Committee; but if that is not the case, I can only hope that, as the Bill of 1853 is abandoned in 1858, within the next five years the House of Commons will take some further steps with regard to this question, with the view of

simplifying the Government of India as carried on in England. I wish to take this opportunity of making some observations upon the general question of Indian government, which it might have been out of place to have made during the discussion of the various Resolutions which have been agreed to by the House.

I think it must have struck every hon. Member that, while two Governments have proposed great changes with regard to the government of India, no good case has really been made out for such changes in the speeches of the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman by whom the two India Bills have been introduced. That opinion, I know, will meet with a response from two or three hon. Gentlemen on this (the Opposition) side of the House. It occurred to me when the noble Lord at the head of the late Government (Viscount Palmerston) introduced his Bill—and I made the observation when the present Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his measure—that if the House knew no more of the question than they learned from the speeches of the Ministers, they could not form any clear notion why it was proposed to overthrow the East India Company. The hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles) has expressed a similar opinion several times during the progress of these discussions. The right hon. Member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham) has also said that the East India Company was being dealt with in a manner in which animals intended for sacrifice were treated in Eastern countries and in ancient times,—they were decked with garlands when they were led out for immolation. That is true; but it does not therefore follow that the House is not quite right in the course it is taking. It must be clear that the moment the House of Commons met this Session there was only one course which the then Government could adopt with reference to this question. A feeling existed throughout the country—I believe I may say it was universal—that for a long time past the government of

India had not been a good government; that grave errors —if not grievous crimes—had been committed in that country. I think the conscience of the nation had been touched on this question, and they came by a leap, as it were—by an irrepressible instinct—to the conclusion that the East India Company must be abolished, and that another and, as the nation hoped, a better government should be established for that country. There was a general impression, arising from past discussion in Parliament, that the industry of the people of India had been grievously neglected; that there was great reason for complaint with respect to the administration of justice; and that with regard to the wars entered into by the Indian Government, there was much of which the people of England had reason to be ashamed.

It has been said by some that these faults are to be attributed to the Board of Control; but I have never defended the Board of Control. I believe everything the East India Company has said of the Board of Control—to its discredit; and I believe that everything the Board of Control has said to the discredit of the East India Company to be perfectly true. There was also a general impression that the expenditure of the East India Government was excessive; and that it had been proved before more than one Committee that the taxes imposed upon the people of India were onerous to the last degree. These subjects were discussed in 1853, at which time, in my opinion, the change now proposed ought to have been effected. Subsequently the calamitous events of 1857 and 1858 occurred; and the nation came at once to the conclusion—a conclusion which I think no disinterested person could resist—that it was impossible that India and its vast population could any longer be retained under the form of government which has existed up to this period. If, then, a change was inevitable, the question was how it should be accomplished and what should be done. I think it is quite clear that the course the noble Lord has pursued is right—

namely, that of insisting that during this present Session, and without delay, the foundation of all reform in the government of India should be commenced at home, because we cannot take a single step in the direction of any real and permanent improvement in the Indian Government until we have reformed what I may call the basis of that Government by changes to be effected in this country.

What, then, is the change which is proposed, and which ought to be made? For my own part, in considering these questions, I cannot altogether approve the Bill now before the House. What we want with regard to the government of India is that which in common conversation is called 'a little more daylight.' We want more simplicity and more responsibility. I objected to the scheme originally proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer because it did not provide these requisites; that scheme so closely resembled the system we were about to overthrow that I could not bring myself to regard it favourably. In considering the subject before Parliament met, I asked myself this question:—'Suppose there had never been an East India Company or any such corporation,—suppose India had been conquered by the forces of the Crown, commanded by generals acting under the authority of the Crown,—how should we then have proposed to govern distant dominions of vast extent, and with a population that could scarcely be counted?' I believe such a system of government as has hitherto existed would never have been established; and if such a system had not existed I am convinced that no Minister would have proposed the plan now submitted to the House.

I think the government would have been placed in the hands of a Secretary of State, with his secretaries, clerks, and staffs of officers, or of a small Board, so small as to prevent responsibility from being diffused and divided, if not actually destroyed. I suspect that the only reason why the Country or Parliament can be disposed to approve the large Council now

proposed is, that they have seen something like a Council heretofore, formerly of twenty-four, and subsequently of eighteen members, and I believe there is something like timidity on the part of the House, and probably on the part of the Government, which hinders them from making so great a change as I have suggested to the simple plan which would probably have existed had no such body as the East India Company ever been established. I am willing to admit candidly that if the government of India at home should be so greatly simplified it will be necessary that very important changes should be made in the government in India. I agree with the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) that the representatives of the Crown in India must have power as well as responsibility; that they should be enabled to deal with emergencies, and to settle the hundred or the thousand questions that must arise among 100,000,000 of people, without sending 10,000 miles to this country to ask questions which ought to be settled at once by some competent authority on the spot.

There are two modes of governing India, and the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Willoughby), who has been a very distinguished servant of the East India Company, has publicly expressed his views upon this question. I have been very much struck with a note attached to the published report of his speech, referring to the multifarious duties discharged by the Directors of the East India Company. That note states that—

'A despatch may be received, containing 60, or 100, or 200 cases; and the despatch, in itself voluminous, is rendered more so by collections attached to it, containing copies of all former correspondence on the subject or subjects, and of all letters written thereon by various local officers, and all papers relating thereto. There has not long since been in the Revenue Department a despatch with 16,263 pages of collections. In 1845 there was one in the same Department with 46,000 pages, and it was stated that Mr. Canning, some years since in the House of Commons, mentioned a military despatch to which were attached 13,511 pages of collections.'

The hon. Gentleman did not say in his speech that anybody at the India House ever read all these things. It was quite

clear that if the Directors were to pretend to go through a waggon-load of documents coming to Leadenhall-street every year it must be only a pretence, and if they want to persuade the House that they give attention to only one-tenth part of these papers they must think the House more credulous than it is in matters of this kind. That is one mode of governing India. It is the mode which has been adopted and the mode which has failed. If we are to have the details settled here, I am perfectly certain we can have no good government in India. I have alluded on a former occasion to a matter which occurred in a Committee upstairs. A gentleman who was examined stated that he had undertaken to brew a wholesome beer, and quite as good as that exported for the supply of the troops, somewhere in the Presidency of Madras, for one-sixth of the price paid by Government for that exported to India from England; that the experiment was completely successful; that the memorandum or record with regard to it was sent home, no doubt forming part of the thousands of pages to which reference has been made; and that it was buried in the heap in which it came, because for years nothing was heard of a proposition which would have saved the Government a very large amount annually and opened a new industry to the population and capital of India. I believe this system of government is one of delay and disappointment—one, actually, of impossibility—one which can by no means form a complete theory of government as held by any persons in the House; and that the other, the simpler system, which I wish the House to undertake, would be one of action, progress, and results, with regard to India, such as we have never yet seen and never can see until there is a complete simplification of the Indian Government in this country.

I come now to the question—and it is for this question that I have wished principally to address the House—if at any time we obtain the simplicity which I contend for with

regard to the government at home, what changes will it be desirable to make in the government in India? And I would make one observation at this point, that in all the statements and arguments which I hope to use, I beg the House to believe that I use them with the greatest possible deference, with the feeling that this is a question upon which no man is at all entitled to dogmatize, that it is a vast question which we all look at as one we are scarcely capable of handling and determining. I submit my views to the House because I have considered the subject more or less for many years, and I believe I am actuated by the simple and honest desire of contributing something to the information and knowledge of Parliament with regard to its duty upon this great question.

What is it we have to complain of in India? What is it that the people of India, if they spoke by my mouth, have to complain of? They would tell the House that, as a rule, throughout almost all the Presidencies, and throughout those Presidencies most which have been longest under British rule, the cultivators of the soil, the great body of the population of India, are in a condition of great impoverishment, of great dejection, and of great suffering. I have, on former occasions, quoted to the House the report of a Committee which I obtained ten years ago, upon which sat several members of the Court of Directors; and they all agreed to report as much as I have now stated to the House—the Report being confined chiefly to the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. If I were now submitting the case of the population of India I would say that the taxes of India are more onerous and oppressive than the taxes of any other country in the world. I think I could demonstrate that proposition to the House. I would show that industry is neglected by the Government to a greater extent probably than is the case in any other country in the world which has been for any length of time under what is termed a civilized and Christian government. I should be able to show from the notes and memoranda

of eminent men in India, of the Governor of Bengal, Mr. Halliday, for example, that there is not and never has been in any country pretending to be civilized, a condition of things to be compared with that which exists under the police administration of the province of Bengal. With regard to the courts of justice I may say the same thing. I could quote passages from books written in favour of the Company with all the bias which the strongest friends of the Company can have, in which the writers declare that, precisely in proportion as English courts of justice have extended, have perjury and all the evils which perjury introduces into the administration of justice prevailed throughout the Presidencies of India. With regard to public works, if I were speaking for the Natives of India, I would state this fact, that in a single English county there are more roads—more travelable roads—than are to be found in the whole of India; and I would say also that the single city of Manchester, in the supply of its inhabitants with the single article of water, has spent a larger sum of money than the East India Company has spent in the fourteen years from 1834 to 1848 in public works of every kind throughout the whole of its vast dominions. I would say that the real activity of the Indian Government has been an activity of conquest and annexation—of conquest and annexation which after a time has led to a fearful catastrophe which has enforced on the House an attention to the question of India, which but for that catastrophe I fear the House would not have given it.

If there were another charge to be made against the past Government of India, it would be with regard to the state of its finances. Where was there a bad Government whose finances were in good order? Where was there a really good Government whose finances were in bad order? Is there a better test in the long run of the condition of a people and the merits of a Government than the state of the finances? And yet not in our own time, but going back through all

the pages of Mill or of any other History of India we find the normal condition of the finances of India has been that of deficit and bankruptcy. I maintain that if that be so, the Government is a bad Government. It has cost more to govern India than the Government has been able to extract from the population of India. The Government has not been scrupulous as to the amount of taxes or the mode in which they have been levied; but still, to carry on the government of India according to the system which has heretofore prevailed, more has been required than the Government has been able to extract by any system of taxation known to them from the population over which they have ruled. It has cost more than 30,000,000*l.* a-year to govern India, and the gross revenue being somewhere about 30,000,000*l.*, and there being a deficit, the deficit has had to be made up by loans. The Government has obtained all they could from the population; it is not enough, and they have had to borrow from the population and from Europeans at a high rate of interest to make up the sum which has been found to be necessary. They have a debt of 60,000,000*l.*; and it is continually increasing; they always have a loan open; and while their debt is increasing their credit has been falling, because they have not treated their creditors very honourably on one or two occasions, and chiefly, of course, on account of the calamities which have recently happened in India. There is one point with regard to taxation which I wish to explain to the House, and I hope that, in the reforms to which the noble Lord is looking forward, it will not be overlooked. I have said that the gross revenue is 30,000,000*l.* Exclusive of the opium revenue, which is not, strictly speaking, and hardly at all, a tax upon the people, I set down the taxation of the country at something like 25,000,000*l.* Hon. Gentlemen must not compare 25,000,000*l.* of taxation in India with 60,000,000*l.* of taxation in England. They must bear in mind that in India they could have twelve days' labour of a man for the same sum in silver

or gold which they have to pay for one day's labour of a man in England; that if, for example, this 25,000,000*l.* were expended in purchasing labour, that sum would purchase twelve times as much in India as in England—that is to say, that the 25,000,000*l.* would purchase as many days' labour in India as 300,000,000*l.* would purchase in England. [An Hon. Member: 'How much is the labour worth?'] That is precisely what I am coming to. If the labour of a man is only worth 2*d.* a-day, they could not expect as much revenue from him as if it were 2*s.* a-day. That is just the point to which I wish the hon. Gentleman would turn his attention. We have in England a population which, for the sake of argument, I will call 30,000,000. We have in India a population of 150,000,000. Therefore, the population of India is five times as great as the population of England. We raise in India, reckoning by the value of labour, taxation equivalent to 300,000,000*l.*, which is five times the English revenue. Some one may probably say, therefore, that the taxation in India and in England appears to be about the same, and no great injury is done. But it must be borne in mind that in England we have an incalculable power of steam, of machinery, of modes of transit, roads, canals, railways, and everything which capital and human invention can bring to help the industry of the people; while in India there is nothing of the kind. In India there is scarcely a decent road, the rivers are not bridged, there are comparatively no steam engines, and none of those aids to industry that meet us at every step in Great Britain and Ireland. Suppose steam-engines, machinery, and modes of transit abolished in England, how much revenue would the Chancellor of the Exchequer obtain from the people of England? Instead of 60,000,000*l.* a-year, would he get 10,000,000*l.*? I doubt it very much. If the House will follow out the argument, they will come to the conclusion that the taxes of the people of India are oppressive to the last degree, and that the Government which has thus

taxed them can be tolerated no longer, and must be put an end to at once and for ever. I wish to say something about the manner in which these great expenses are incurred. The extravagance of the East India Government is notorious to all. I believe there never was any other service under the sun paid at so high a rate as the exclusive Civil Service of the East India Company. Clergymen and missionaries can be got to go out to India for a moderate sum—private soldiers and officers of the army go out for a moderate remuneration—merchants are content to live in the cities of India for a percentage or profit not greatly exceeding the ordinary profits of commerce. But the Civil Service, because it is bound up with those who were raised by it and who dispense the patronage of India, receive a rate of payment which would be incredible if we did not know it to be true, and which, knowing it to be true, we must admit to be monstrous. The East India Government scatters salaries about at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Agra, Lahore, and half a dozen other cities, which are up to the mark of those of the Prime Minister and Secretaries of State in this country. These salaries are framed upon the theory that India is a mine of inexhaustible wealth, although no one has found it to be so but the members of the Civil Service of the East India Company. The policy of the Government is at the bottom of the constant deficit. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has twice recently declared that expenditure depends upon policy. That is as true in India as in England, and it is the policy that has been pursued there which renders the revenue liable to this constantly recurring deficit.

I have come to the conclusion, which many hon. Members probably share with me, that the edifice we have reared in India is too vast. There are few men now, and least of all those connected with the East India Company, who, looking back to the policy that has been pursued, will not be willing to admit that it has not been judicious but hazardous—that

territories have been annexed that had better have been left independent, and that wars have been undertaken which were as needless as they were altogether unjustifiable. The immense empire that has been conquered is too vast for management, its base is in decay, and during the last twelve months it has appeared to be tottering to its fall. Who or what is the instrument—the Cabinet, the Government, or the person—by whom this evil policy is carried on?

The greatest officer in India is the Governor-General. He is the ruler of about one-fifth—certainly more than one-sixth—of the human race. The Emperors of France and Russia are but the governors of provinces compared with the power, the dignity, and the high estate of the Governor-General of India. Now, over this officer, almost no real control is exercised. If I were to appeal to the two hon. Gentlemen who have frequently addressed the House during these debates (Colonel Sykes and Mr. Willoughby), they would probably admit that the Governor-General of India is an officer of such high position that scarcely any control can be exercised over him either in India or in England. Take the case of the Marquess of Dalhousie for example. I am not about to make an attack upon him, for the occasion is too solemn for personal controversies. But the annexation of Sattara, of the Punjab, of Nagpore, and of Oude occurred under his rule. I will not go into the case of Sattara; but one of its Princes, and one of the most magnanimous Princes that India ever produced, suffered and died most unjustly in exile, either through the mistakes or the crimes of the Government of India. This, however, was not done under the Government of Lord Dalhousie. As to the annexation of Nagpore, the House has never heard anything about it to this hour. There has been no message from the Crown or statement of the Government relative to that annexation. Hon. Members have indeed heard from India that the dresses and wardrobes of the ladies of its Court have been exposed to sale, like a

bankrupt's stock, in the haberdashers' shops of Calcutta—a thing likely to incense and horrify the people of India who witnessed it.

Take, again, the case of the Burmese war. The Governor-General entered into it, and annexed the province of Pegu, and to this day there has been no treaty with the King of Burmah. If that case had been brought before the House, it is impossible that the war with Burmah could have been entered upon. I do not believe that there is one man in England who, knowing the facts, would say that this war was just or necessary in any sense. The Governor-General has an army of 300,000 men under his command; he is a long way from home; he is highly connected with the governing classes at home; there are certain reasons that make war palatable to large classes in India; and he is so powerful that he enters into these great military operations almost uncontrolled by the opinion of the Parliament and people of England. He may commit any amount of blunders or crimes against the moral law, and he will still come home loaded with dignities and in the enjoyment of pensions. Does it not become the power and character of this House to examine narrowly the origin of the misfortunes and disgraces of the grave catastrophe which has just occurred? The place of the Governor-General is too high—his power is too great—and I believe that this particular office and officer are very much responsible—of course under the Government at home—for the disasters that have taken place.

Only think of a Governor-General of India writing to an Indian Prince, the ruler over many millions of men in the heart of India, 'Remember you are but as the dust under my feet.' Passages like these are left out of despatches, when laid on the table of the House of Commons:—it would not do for the Parliament or the Crown, or the people of England to know that their officer addressed language like this to a Native Prince. The fact is that a Governor-General of India,

unless he be such a man as is not found more than once in a century, is very liable to have his head turned, and to form ambitious views, which are mainly to be gratified by successful wars and the annexation of province after province during the period of his rule. The 'Services' are always ready to help him in these plans. I am not sure that the President of the Board of Control could not give evidence on this subject, for I have heard something of what happened when the noble Lord was in India. When the Burmese war broke out, the noble Lord could no doubt tell the House that, without inquiring into the quarrel or its causes, the press of India, which was devoted to the 'Services,' and the 'Services' themselves, united in universal approbation of the course taken by the Governor-General. Justice to Pegu and Burmah and the taxes to be raised for the support of the war were forgotten, and nothing but visions of more territory and more patronage floated before the eyes of the official English in India. I contend that the power of the Governor-General is too great and the office too high to be held by the subject of any power whatsoever, and especially by any subject of the Queen of England.

I should propose, if I were in a position to offer a scheme in the shape of a Bill to the House, as an indispensable preliminary to the wise government of India in future, such as would be creditable to Parliament and advantageous to the people of India, that the office of Governor-General should be abolished. Perhaps some hon. Gentlemen may think this a very unreasonable proposition. Many people thought it unreasonable in 1853 when it was proposed to abolish the East India Company; but now Parliament and the country believe it to be highly reasonable and proper; and I am not sure that I could not bring before the House reasons to convince them that the abolition of the office of Governor-General is one of the most sensible and one of the most Conservative proposals ever brought forward in connection with the Government

of India. I believe the duties of the Governor-General are far greater than any human being can adequately fulfil. He has a power omnipotent to crush anything that is good. If he so wishes, he can overbear and overrule whatever is proposed for the welfare of India, while, as to doing anything that is good, I could show that with regard to the vast countries over which he rules, he is really almost powerless to effect anything that those countries require. The hon. Gentleman behind me (Colonel Sykes) has told us there are twenty nations in India, and that there are twenty languages. Has it ever happened before that any one man governed twenty nations, speaking twenty different languages, and bound them together in one great and compact empire? [An hon. Member here made an observation.] My hon. Friend mentions a great Parthian monarch. No doubt there have been men strong in arm and in head, and of stern resolution, who have kept great empires together during their lives; but as soon as they went the way of all flesh, and descended, like the meanest of their subjects, to the tomb, the provinces they had ruled were divided into several States, and their great empires vanished. I might ask the noble Lord below me (Lord John Russell) and the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has not as yet experience on this point), whether, when they came to appoint a Governor-General of India, they did not find it one of the most serious and difficult duties they could be called on to perform? I do not know at this moment, and I never have known, a man competent to govern India; and if any man says he is competent, he sets himself up at a much higher value than those who are acquainted with him are likely to set him. Let the House look at the making of the laws for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. Look at the regulations of the police for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. Look at the question of public works as it affects twenty nations speaking twenty

languages; where there is no municipal power and no combinations of any kind, such as facilitate the construction of public works in this country. Inevitably all those duties that devolve on every good government must be neglected by the Governor-General of India, however wise, capable, and honest he may be in the performance of his duties, because the duties laid upon him are such as no man now living or who ever lived can or could properly sustain.

It may be asked what I would substitute for the Governor-Generalship of India. Now, I do not propose to abolish the office of Governor-General of India this Session. I am not proposing any clause in the Bill, and if I were to propose one to carry out the idea I have expressed, I might be answered by the argument, that a great part of the population of India is in a state of anarchy, and that it would be most inconvenient, if not dangerous, to abolish the office of Governor-General at such a time. I do not mean to propose such a thing now; but I take this opportunity of stating my views, in the hope that when we come to 1863, we may perhaps be able to consider the question more in the light in which I am endeavouring to present it to the House. I would propose that, instead of having a Governor-General and an Indian empire, we should have neither the one nor the other. I would propose that we should have Presidencies, and not an Empire. If I were a Minister—which the House will admit is a bold figure of speech—and if the House were to agree with me—which is also an essential point—I would propose to have at least five Presidencies in India, and I would have the governments of those Presidencies perfectly equal in rank and in salary. The capitals of those Presidencies would probably be Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Agra, and Lahore. I will take the Presidency of Madras as an illustration. Madras has a population of some 20,000,000. We all know its position on the map, and that it has the advantage of being more compact, geographically speaking, than the other

Presidencies. It has a Governor and a Council. I would give to it a Governor and a Council still, but would confine all their duties to the Presidency of Madras, and I would treat it just as if Madras was the only portion of India connected with this country. I would have its finance, its taxation, its justice, and its police departments, as well as its public works and military departments, precisely the same as if it were a State having no connection with any other part of India, and recognized only as a dependency of this country. I would propose that the Government of every Presidency should correspond with the Secretary for India in England, and that there should be telegraphic communications between all the Presidencies in India, as I hope before long to see a telegraphic communication between the office of the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and every Presidency over which he presides. I shall no doubt be told that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of such an arrangement, and I shall be sure to hear of the military difficulty. Now, I do not profess to be an authority on military affairs, but I know that military men often make great mistakes. I would have the army divided, each Presidency having its own army, just as now, care being taken to have them kept distinct; and I see no danger of any confusion or misunderstanding, when an emergency arose, in having them all brought together to carry out the views of the Government. There is one question which it is important to bear in mind, and that is with regard to the Councils in India. I think every Governor of a Presidency should have an assistant Council, but differently constituted from what they now are. I would have an open Council. The noble Lord the Member for London used some expressions the other night which I interpreted to mean that it was necessary to maintain in all its exclusiveness the system of the Civil Service in India. In that I entirely differ from the noble Lord. [Lord J. Russell here indicated dissent.] The noble Lord corrects me in that statement, and

therefore I must have been mistaken. What we want is to make the Governments of the Presidencies governments for the people of the Presidencies; not governments for the civil servants of the Crown, but for the non-official mercantile classes from England who settle there, and for the 20,000,000 or 30,000,000 of Natives in each Presidency.

I should propose to do that which has been done with great advantage in Ceylon. I have received a letter from an officer who has been in the service of the East India Company, and who told me a fact which has gratified me very much. He says -

> 'At a public dinner at Colombo, in 1835, to the Governor, Sir Wilmot Horton, at which I was present, the best speech of the evening was made by a native nobleman of Candy, and a member of Council. It was remarkable for its appropriate expression, its sound sense, and the deliberation and ease that marked the utterance of his feelings. There was no repetition or useless phraseology or flattery, and it was admitted by all who heard him to be the soundest and neatest speech of the night.'

This was in Ceylon. It is not, of course, always the best man who can make the best speech; but if what I have read could be said of a native of Ceylon, it could be said of thousands in India. We need not go beyond the walls of this House to find a head bronzed by an Indian sun equal to the ablest heads of those who adorn its benches. And in every part of India we all know that it would be an insult to the people of India to say that it is not the same. There are thousands of persons in India who are competent to take any position to which the Government may choose to advance them. If the Governor of each Presidency were to have in his Council some of the officials of his Government, some of the non-official Europeans resident in the Presidency, and two or three at least of the intelligent Natives of the Presidency in whom the people would have some confidence, you would have begun that which will be of inestimable value hereafter —you would have begun to unite the government with the governed; and unless you do that, no government will be

safe, and any hurricane may overturn it or throw it into confusion.

Now, suppose the Governor-General gone, the Presidencies established, the Governors equal in rank and dignity, and their Councils constituted in the manner I have indicated, is it not reasonable to suppose that the delay which has hitherto been one of the greatest curses of your Indian Government would be almost altogether avoided? Instead of a Governor-General living in Calcutta, or at Simla, never travelling over the whole of the country, and knowing very little about it, and that little only through other official eyes, is it not reasonable to suppose that the action of the Government would be more direct in all its duties and in every department of its service than has been the case under the system which has existed until now? Your administration of the law, marked by so much disgrace, could never have lasted so long as it has done if the Governors of your Presidencies had been independent Governors. So with regard to matters of police, education, public works, and everything that can stimulate industry, and so with regard to your system of taxation. You would have in every Presidency a constant rivalry for good. The Governor of Madras, when his term of office expired, would be delighted to show that the people of that Presidency were contented, that the whole Presidency was advancing in civilization, that roads and all manner of useful public works were extending, that industry was becoming more and more a habit of the people, and that the exports and imports were constantly increasing. The Governors of Bombay and the rest of the Presidencies would be animated by the same spirit, and so you would have all over India, as I have said, a rivalry for good; you would have placed a check on that malignant spirit of ambition which has worked so much evil—you would have no Governor so great that you could not control him, none who might make war when he pleased; war and annexation

would be greatly checked, if not entirely prevented; and I do in my conscience believe you would have laid the foundation for a better and more permanent form of government for India than has ever obtained since it came under the rule of England.

But how long does England propose to govern India? Nobody answers that question, and nobody can answer it. Be it 50, or 100, or 500 years, does any man with the smallest glimmering of common sense believe that so great a country, with its twenty different nations and its twenty languages, can ever be bound up and consolidated into one compact and enduring empire? I believe such a thing to be utterly impossible. We must fail in the attempt if ever we make it, and we are bound to look into the future with reference to that point. The Presidency of Madras, for instance, having its own Government, would in fifty years become one compact State, and every part of the Presidency would look to the city of Madras as its capital, and to the Government of Madras as its ruling power. If that were to go on for a century or more, there would be five or six Presidencies of India built up into so many compact States; and if at any future period the sovereignty of England should be withdrawn, we should leave so many Presidencies built up and firmly compacted together, each able to support its own independence and its own Government; and we should be able to say we had not left the country a prey to that anarchy and discord which I believe to be inevitable if we insist on holding those vast territories with the idea of building them up into one great empire. But I am obliged to admit that mere machinery is not sufficient in this case, either with respect to my own scheme or to that of the noble lord (Lord Stanley). We want something else than mere clerks, stationery, despatches, and so forth. We want what I shall designate as a new feeling in England, and an entirely new policy in India. We must in future have India governed,

not for a handful of Englishmen, not for that Civil Service whose praises are so constantly sounded in this House. You may govern India, if you like, for the good of England, but the good of England must come through the channels of the good of India. There are but two modes of gaining anything by our connection with India. The one is by plundering the people of India, and the other by trading with them. I prefer to do it by trading with them. But in order that England may become rich by trading with India, India itself must become rich, and India can only become rich through the honest administration of justice and through entire security of life and property.

Now, as to this new policy, I will tell the House what I think the Prime Minister should do. He ought, I think, always to choose for his President of the Board of Control or his Secretary of State for India, a man who cannot be excelled by any other man in his Cabinet, or in his party, for capacity, for honesty, for attention to his duties, and for knowledge adapted to the particular office to which he is appointed. If any Prime Minister appoint an inefficient man to such an office, he will be a traitor to the Throne of England. That officer, appointed for the qualities I have just indicated, should, with equal scrupulousness and conscientiousness, make the appointments, whether of the Governor-General, or (should that office be abolished) of the Governors of the Presidencies of India. Those appointments should not be rewards for old men simply because such men have done good service when in their prime, nor should they be rewards for mere party service, but they should be appointments given under a feeling that interests of the very highest moment, connected with this country, depend on those great offices in India being properly filled. The same principles should run throughout the whole system of government; for, unless there be a very high degree of virtue in all these appointments, and unless our great object be to govern India well and to exalt the

name of England in the eyes of the whole Native population, all that we have recourse to in the way of machinery will be of very little use indeed.

I admit that this is a great work; I admit, also, that the further I go into the consideration of this question, the more I feel that it is too large for me to grapple with, and that every step we take in it should be taken as if we were men walking in the dark. We have, however, certain great principles to guide us, and by their light we may make steps in advance, if not fast, at any rate sure. But we start from an unfortunate position. We start from a platform of conquest by force of arms extending over a hundred years. There is nothing in the world worse than the sort of foundation from which we start. The greatest genius who has shed lustre on the literature of this country has said, 'There is no sure foundation set on blood;' and it may be our unhappy fate, in regard to India, to demonstrate the truth of that saying. We are always subjugators, and we must be viewed with hatred and suspicion. I say we must look at the thing as it is, if we are to see our exact position, what our duty is, and what chance there is of our retaining India and of governing it for the advantage of its people. Our difficulties have been enormously increased by the revolt. The people of India have only seen England in its worst form in that country. They have seen it in its military power, its exclusive Civil Service, and in the supremacy of a handful of foreigners. When Natives of India come to this country, they are delighted with England and with Englishmen. They find themselves treated with a kindness, a consideration, a respect, to which they were wholly strangers in their own country; and they cannot understand how it is that men who are so just, so attentive to them here, sometimes, indeed too often, appear to them in a different character in India. I remember that the Hon. Frederic Shaw, who wrote some thirty years since, stated, in his able and instructive book, that even in

his time the conduct of the English in India towards the Natives was less agreeable, less kindly, less just than it had been in former years; and in 1853, before the Committee presided over by the hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. T. Baring), evidence was given that the feeling between the rulers and the ruled in India was becoming every year less like what could be desired. It was only the other day there appeared in a letter of *The Times'* correspondent an anecdote which illustrates what I am saying, and which I feel it necessary to read to the House. Mr. Russell, of *The Times*, says:—

'I went off to breakfast in a small mosque, which has been turned into a *salle à manger* by some officers stationed here, and I confess I should have eaten with more satisfaction had I not seen, as I entered the enclosure of the mosque, a native badly wounded on a charpoy, by which was sitting a woman in deep affliction. The explanation given of this scene was that "——[the name of the Englishman was left blank] had been licking two of his bearers (or servants), and had nearly murdered them." This was one of the servants, and, without knowing or caring to know the causes of such chastisement, I cannot but express my disgust at the severity—to call it by no harsher name—of some of our fellow countrymen towards their domestics.'

The reading of that paragraph gave me extreme pain. People may fancy that this does not matter much; but I say it matters very much. Under any system of government you will have Englishmen scattered all over India, and conduct like that I have just described, in any district, must create ill feeling towards England, to your rule, to your supremacy; and when that feeling has become sufficiently extensive, any little accident may give fire to the train, and you may have calamities more or less serious, such as we have had during the last twelve months. You must change all this if you mean to keep India. I do not now make any comment upon the mode in which this country has been put into possession of India. I accept that possession as a fact. There we are; we do not know how to leave it, and therefore let us see if we know how to govern it. It is a problem such as, perhaps, no other nation has had to solve. Let us see whether there

is enough of intelligence and virtue in England to solve the difficulty. In the first place, then, I say, let us abandon all that system of calumny against the Natives of India which has lately prevailed. Had that people not been docile, the most governable race in the world, how could you have maintained your power for 100 years? Are they not industrious, are they not intelligent, are they not—upon the evidence of the most distinguished men the Indian Service ever produced —endowed with many qualities which make them respected by all Englishmen who mix with them? I have heard that from many men of the widest experience, and have read the same in the works of some of the best writers upon India. Then let us not have these constant calumnies against such a people. Even now there are men who go about the country speaking as if such things had never been contradicted, and talking of mutilations and atrocities committed in India. The less we say about atrocities the better. Great political tumults are, I fear, never brought about or carried on without grievous acts on both sides deeply to be regretted. At least, we are in the position of invaders and conquerors—they are in the position of the invaded and the conquered. Whether I were a native of India, or of England, or of any other country, I would not the less assert the great distinction between their position and ours in that country, and I would not permit any man in my presence, without rebuke, to indulge in the calumnies and expressions of contempt which I have recently heard poured forth without measure upon the whole population of India.

There is one other point to which I wish to address myself before I sit down, and in touching upon it I address myself especially to the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and his colleagues in the Government. If I had the responsibility of administering the affairs of India, there are certain things I would do. I would, immediately after this Bill passes, issue a Proclamation in India which should reach every subject of

the British Crown in that country, and be heard of in the territories of every Indian Prince or Rajah. I would offer a general amnesty. It is all very well to talk of issuing an amnesty to all who have done nothing; but who is there that has done nothing in such a state of affairs as has prevailed during the past twelve months? If you pursue your vengeance until you have rooted out and destroyed every one of those soldiers who have revolted, when will your labour cease? If you are to punish every non-military Native of India who has given a piece of bread or a cup of water to a revolted trooper, how many Natives will escape your punishment and your vengeance? I would have a general amnesty, which should be put forth as the first great act done directly by the Queen of England in the exercise of Sovereign power over the territories of India. In this Proclamation I would promise to the Natives of India a security for their property as complete as we have here at home; and I would put an end to all those mischievous and irritating inquiries which have been going on for years in many parts of India as to the title to landed estates, by which you tell the people of that country that unless each man can show an unimpeachable title to his property for ninety years you will dispossess him. What would be the state of things here if such a regulation were adopted?

I would also proclaim to the people of India that we would hold sacred that right of adoption which has prevailed for centuries in that country. It was only the other day that I had laid before me the case of a Native Prince who has been most faithful to England during these latter trials. When he came to the throne at ten years of age he was made to sign a document, by which he agreed that if he had no children his territories should be at the disposal of the British Government, or what was called the paramount power. He has been married; he has had one son and two or three daughters; but within the last few weeks his only

son has died. There is grief in the palace, and there is consternation among the people, for the fact of this agreement entered into by the boy of ten years old is well known to all the inhabitants of the country. Representations have already been made to this country in the hope that the Government will cancel that agreement, and allow the people of that State to know that the right of adoption would not be taken from their Prince in case he should have no other son. Let the Government do that, and there is not a corner of India into which that intelligence would not penetrate with the rapidity of lightning. And would not that calm the anxieties of many of those independent Princes and Rajahs who are only afraid that when these troubles are over, the English Government will recommence that system of annexation out of which I believe all these troubles have arisen?

I would tell them also in that Proclamation, that while the people of England hold that their own, the Christian religion, is true and the best for mankind, yet that it is consistent with that religion that they who profess it should hold inviolable the rights of conscience and the rights of religion in others. I would show, that whatever violent, over-zealous, and fanatical men may have said in this country, the Parliament of England, the Ministers of the Queen, and the Queen herself are resolved that upon this point no kind of wrong should be done to the millions who profess the religions held to be true in India. I would do another thing. I would establish a Court of Appeal, the Judges of which should be Judges of the highest character in India, for the settlement of those many disputes which have arisen between the Government of India and its subjects, some Native and some European. I would not suffer these questions to come upon the floor of this House. I would not forbid them by statute, but I would establish a Court which should render it unnecessary for any man in India to cross the ocean to

seek for that justice which he would then be able to get in his own country without corruption or secret bargain. Then I would carry out the proposition which the noble Lord has made to-night, and which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer made when he introduced his Bill, that a Commission should be issued to inquire into the question of finance. I would have other commissions, one for each Presidency, and I would tell the people of India that there should be a searching inquiry into their grievances, and that it was the interest and the will of the Queen of England that those grievances should be redressed.

Now, perhaps I may be told that I am proposing strange things, quite out of the ordinary routine of government. I admit it. We are in a position that necessitates something out of the ordinary routine. There are positions and times in the history of every country, as in the lives of individuals, when courage and action are absolute salvation; and now the Crown of England, acting by the advice of the responsible Ministers, must, in my opinion, have recourse to a great and unusual measure in order to allay the anxieties which prevail throughout the whole of India. The people of India do not like us, but they scarcely know where to turn if we left them. They are sheep literally without a shepherd. They are people whom you have subdued, and who have the highest and strongest claims upon you—claims which you cannot forget—claims which, if you do not act upon, you may rely upon it that, if there be a judgment for nations—as I believe there is—as for individuals, our children in no distant generation must pay the penalty which we have purchased by neglecting our duty to the populations of India.

I have now stated my views and opinions on this question, not at all in a manner, I feel, equal to the question itself. I have felt the difficulty in thinking of it; I feel the difficulty in speaking of it—for there is far more in it and about it than any man, however much he may be accustomed to think

upon political questions, and to discuss them, can comprise at all within the compass of a speech of ordinary length. I have described the measures which I would at once adopt for the purpose of soothing the agitation which now disturbs and menaces every part of India, and of inviting the submission of those who are now in arms against you. Now I believe—I speak in the most perfect honesty—I believe that the announcement of these measures would avail more in restoring tranquillity than the presence of an additional army, and I believe that their full and honest adoption would enable you to retain your power in India. I have sketched the form of government which I would establish in India and at home, with the view of securing perfect responsibility and an enlightened administration. I admit that these things can only be obtained in degree, but I am convinced that a Government such as that which I have sketched would be free from most of the errors and the vices that have marked and marred your past career in India. I have given much study to this great and solemn question. I entreat the House to study it not only now, during the passing of this Bill, but after the Session is over, and till we meet again next year, when in all probability there must be further legislation upon this great subject; for I believe that upon this question depends very much, for good or for evil, the future of this country of which we are citizens, and which we all regard and love so much. You have had enough of military reputation on Eastern fields; you have gathered large harvests of that commodity, be it valuable or be it worthless. I invite you to something better, and higher, and holier than that; I invite you to a glory not 'fanned by conquest's crimson wing,' but based upon the solid and lasting benefits which I believe the Parliament of England can, if it will, confer upon the countless populations of India.

# INDIA.

## III.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 20, 1858.

*From Hansard.*

[A despatch of Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, to Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India, had been laid before the two Houses. This document severely censured the Governor-General's policy in dealing with the talookdars of Oude. Immediate advantage was taken of this document by the Opposition, and on the 10th of May Mr. Cardwell gave notice in the Commons of a motion condemnatory of Lord Ellenborough's despatch. Lord Ellenborough retired from the Government. On May 14, however, Mr. Cardwell brought forward his motion in the House of Commons, but, after a lengthened debate, consented to withdraw it, at the earnest entreaty of many from his own side of the House.]

I AM afraid I shall hardly be able to take part in this discussion in a manner becoming the magnitude of the question before us, and in any degree in accordance with the long anxiety which I have felt in regard to Indian affairs, but I happen to have been unfortunately and accidentally a good deal mixed up with these matters, and my name has frequently been mentioned in the course of debate, not only in this but in the other House of Parliament, and I am unwilling, therefore, to vote without expressing my opinion upon the matter under discussion. First, I may be allowed to explain that I think almost everything that has been said and imagined with regard to the part that I have had in

bringing on this discussion has been altogether erroneous, and has no foundation whatever. There was no arrangement between the hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control and myself with regard to the question that I thought it my duty to put to him on the subject of Lord Canning's Proclamation. I had spoken two or three weeks before the date of that question to the hon. Gentleman, because I had been informed by a respected friend of mine, Mr. Dickinson, the hon. secretary of the India Reform Society, who has very great information on Indian affairs, that he had received communications to the effect that some Proclamation of this character was in preparation and was about to be issued. I spoke to the hon. Member with regard to that report; and he told me that he had received no communication which enabled him to give me any information on the subject. I then intimated to him that in case there was anything of the kind I should certainly put a question to the Government respecting it. This was three weeks before the date of my question. Well, I read the Proclamation in *The Times* newspaper, the same day that every one else read it; and I came down to the House, not having seen the hon. Gentleman in the meantime. I met my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. J. B. Smith) in Westminster Hall, and he told me that having read the despatch, and knowing my intention with regard to it, he, having met the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baillie) that evening, said to him he had no doubt that when I came down to the House I should put a question respecting it. When I came down I put a question and received an answer; both question and answer are before the House and the country. But I confess I did not anticipate that we should lose a week from the discussion of the Indian Resolutions on account of the question which I then asked the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Control.

Now, Sir, with respect to the question before the House,

I should have been content to let it end when the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor-General sat down. I think, Sir, the House might have come to a vote when the Solicitor-General finished his speech. I could not but compare that speech with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution now before the House. I thought the right hon. Gentleman raked together a great many small things to make up a great case. It appeared to me that he spoke as if his manner indicated that he was not perfectly satisfied with the course he was pursuing. I think he failed to stimulate himself with the idea that he was performing a great public duty; for if he had been impressed with that idea I think his subject would have enabled him to deliver a more lively and impressive speech than that which he has made. But, Sir, I believe that every one will admit that the speech of the Solicitor-General was characterised by the closest logic and the most complete and exhaustive argument. There is scarcely a Gentleman with whom I have spoken with regard to that speech who does not admit that the hon. and learned Gentleman has seemed to have taken up the whole question, and to have given a complete answer to all serious charges brought against the Government.

This Motion is an important one in two aspects. First of all as respects the interests of parties at home—which some people, probably, think the more important of the interests concerned; and, secondly, as respects the effect which will be produced in India when this discussion, with the vote at which we arrive, reaches that country and is read there. The princes, the rajahs, and intelligent landholders, whether under the English Government or independent, will know very little about what we understand by party; and any cabal or political conspiracy here will have no influence on them. They know little of the persons who conduct and take a part in the debate in this House; and the 'loud cheers'

which they will read of in our discussions will be almost nothing to them. The question to them will be, What is the opinion of the Parliament of England as to the policy announced to India in the Proclamation?

Now, Sir, I complain of the right hon. Gentleman, and I think the House has reason to complain, that in his Resolution he endeavours to evade the real point of discussion. The noble Lord who has just sat down (Viscount Goderich) says he will not meet this matter in any such indirect manner as that proposed by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn); but what can be less direct than the issue offered by the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford? This is proved by the fact that, throughout the course of this discussion, every serious argument and every serious expression has had reference to the character of the Proclamation, and not to those little matters which are mixed up in this Resolution. Nobody, I believe, defends the Proclamation in the light in which it is viewed by the Government, and censured by the Government. All that has been done is an endeavour to show that it is not rightly understood by those who censure it as announcing a policy of confiscation. In fact, in endeavouring to defend it, hon. Members insist that it does not mean something which it says it does mean, and which if any of us understand the English language it assuredly does mean. The right hon. Gentleman asks us to do that which I think is an absolute impossibility. He wants us to condemn the censure, and wishes at the same time—and I give him credit for this—that we should pronounce no approval of the thing censured. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman, though unfortunately he has been led into this movement, wishes the House to pronounce an opinion in favour of confiscation. I do not believe that any Member of this House asks us to come to a conclusion in such a way as that our decision shall be an approval of that which the Government has

condemned in the despatch. But if we affirm the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, how is it possible for the people of India to understand our decision in any other sense than as an approval of the policy of Lord Canning's Proclamation? With regard to the publication of the Government despatch, it is not a little remarkable how men turn round and object to what they formerly were so loud in demanding. On this side of the House it has been the commonest thing to hear hon. Gentlemen say that all this secrecy on the part of the Foreign Office and the Board of Control is a cause of the greatest mischief. Assume for a moment that the publication of this despatch was injudicious—after all, it was no high crime and misdemeanour. We on this side of the House, and hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, ought to look with kindness on this failing, which, if a failing, leans to virtue's side. Then, Sir, with regard to the language of the despatch, I do not know of any Government or Minister who would not be open to censure if we chose to take up every word in a despatch. A man of firmer texture, of stronger impulse, and more indignant feelings will, on certain occasions, write in stronger terms than other men—and I confess I like those men best who write and speak so that you can really understand them. Now I say that the proposition before the House is a disingenuous one. It attempts to lead the House into a very unfortunate dilemma. I think that no judicial mind—seeing that the result of a decision in favour of this Resolution will be the establishment of the policy of the Proclamation—will fail to be convinced that we ought not to arrive at such a decision without great hesitation, and that we cannot do so without producing a very injurious effect on the minds of the people of India.

We now come to what all parties admit to be the real question—the Proclamation and the policy of confiscation announced in it. There are certain matters which I understand all sides of the House to be agreed on. They agree

with the Government and the East India Company that the people of Oude are enemies but that they are not rebels. [Cries of 'Yes, yes!'—'No, no!'] I thought the supporters of the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford told us that if the Government had written a judicious despatch like that of the East India Company, they would have applauded and not censured it. Well, the East India Directors—and they are likely to know, for they were connected with the commission of the Act that brought this disturbance in Oude upon us—say that the people of Oude are not rebels; that they are not to be treated as rebels, but as enemies. If so, the Government have a right to treat them according to those rules which are observed by nations which are at war with each other. Will the House accept that proposition? ['No, no!'—'Yes, yes!'] Well, if hon. Gentlemen on this side will not accept it, I hope the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich) will not include them amongst those who are in favour of clemency. I am quite sure the people of England will accept that definition—that civilised Europe will accept it; and that history—history which will record our proceedings this night, and our vote on this Resolution—will accept it. Sir, I do not see how any one claiming to be an Englishman or a Christian can by any possibility escape from condemning the policy of this Proclamation.

I now come—and on that point I will be as brief as possible—to the question. What is the meaning of confiscating the proprietary rights in the soil? We have heard from a noble Lord in 'another place,' and it has been stated in the course of the debate here, that this sentence of confiscation refers only to certain unpleasant persons who are called talookdars, who are barons and robber chiefs and oppressors of the people. This is by no means the first time that, after a great wrong has been committed, the wrong-doer has attempted to injure by calumny those upon whom

the wrong has been inflicted. Lord Shaftesbury, who is a sort of leader in this great war, has told the world that this Proclamation refers only to 600 persons in the kingdom of Oude.

The kingdom of Oude has about five millions of people, or one-sixth of the population of the United Kingdom. Applied to the United Kingdom in the same rate of the population it would apply to 3,600 persons. Now, in both Houses of Parliament there are probably 700 landed proprietors. It would, therefore, be an edict of confiscation to the landed proprietors of the United Kingdom equal to five times all the landed proprietors in both Houses of Parliament. An hon. Gentleman says I am all wrong in my figures. I shall be glad to hear his figures afterwards. But that is not the fact; but if it were the fact, it would amount not to a political, but to an entire social revolution in this country. And surely, when you live in a country where you have, as in Scotland, a great province under one Member of the House of Lords, and seventy or eighty miles of territory under another, and where you have Dukes of Bedford and Dukes of Devonshire, as in England—surely, I say, we ought to be a little careful, at any rate, that we do not overturn, without just cause, the proprietary rights of the great talookdars and landowners in India. It is a known fact, which anybody may ascertain by referring to books which have been written, and to witnesses who cannot be mistaken, that this edict would apply to more than 40,000 landowners in the kingdom of Oude. And what is it that is meant by these proprietary rights? We must see what is the general course of the policy of our government in India. If you sweep away all proprietary rights in the kingdom of Oude you will have this result—that there will be nobody connected with the land but the Government of India and the humble cultivator who tills the soil. And you will have this further result, that the whole produce of the land of Oude and of the industry of its people will be divided into two most unequal portions; the larger share will go to the

Government in the shape of tax, and the smaller share, which will be a handful of rice per day, will go to the cultivator of the soil. Now, this is the Indian system. It is the grand theory of the civilians, under whose advice, I very much fear, Lord Canning has unfortunately acted; and you will find in many parts of India, especially in the Presidency of Madras, that the population consists entirely of the class of cultivators, and that the Government stands over them with a screw which is perpetually turned, leaving the handful of rice per day to the ryot or the cultivator, and pouring all the rest of the produce of the soil into the Exchequer of the East India Company. Now, I believe that this Proclamation sanctions this policy; and I believe further that the Resolution which the right hon. Gentleman asks the House to adopt, sanctions this Proclamation; that it will be so read in India, and that whatever may be the influence, unfortunate as I believe it will be, of the Proclamation itself, when it is known throughout India that this—the highest court of appeal has pronounced in favour of Lord Canning's policy, it will be one of the most unfortunate declarations that ever went forth from the Parliament of this country to the people of that empire.

Let me then for one minute—and it shall be but for one minute—ask the attention of the House to our pecuniary dealings with Oude. A friend of mine has extracted from a book on this subject two or three facts which I should like to state to the House, as we are now considering the policy of England towards that afflicted country. It is stated that, under the government of Warren Hastings, to the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in 1786, the East India Company obtained from the kingdom of Oude, and therefore from the Exchequer of the people of Oude, the sum of 9,252,000*l.*; under Lord Cornwallis, 4,290,000*l.*; under Lord Teignmouth, 1,280,000*l.*; under Lord Wellesley, 10,358,000*l.* This includes, I ought to observe, the Doab, taken in 1801 in lieu of subsidy, the annual revenue of that district being 1,352,000*l.* Coming

down to the year 1814, there was a loan of a million; in 1815 a loan of a million; in 1825 a loan of a million; in 1826 a loan of a million; in 1829 a loan of 625,000*l.*; and in 1838 a loan of 1,700,000*l.* Some of these sums, the House will observe, are loans, and in one case the loan was repaid by a portion of territory which the Company, in a very few years, under an excuse which I should not like to justify, re-annexed to themselves, and therefore the debt was virtually never repaid. The whole of these sums comes to 31,500,000*l.*; in addition to which Oude has paid vast sums in salaries, pensions, and emoluments of every kind to servants of the Company engaged in the service of the Government of Oude.

I am not going further into detail with regard to that matter; but I say that the history of our connection with the country, whose interests we are now discussing, is of a nature that ought to make us pause before we consent to any measure that shall fill up the cup of injury which we have offered to the lips of that people. After this, two years ago, we deposed the Sovereign of Oude. Everything that he had was seized—much of it was sold. Indignities were offered to his family. Their ruin was accomplished, though they were the governors of that kingdom. Some hon. Gentleman, speaking on this side of the House, has tried to persuade the House that this confiscation policy only intends that we should receive the taxes of Oude. But that is altogether a delusion. That is a statement so absurd that I am astonished that any one, even of those who support the Resolution, should offer it to the House. In 1856, when you dethroned the King of Oude, you stepped into his place, and became the recipients of all the legitimate national taxes of the kingdom of Oude; and now, having seized the 500,000*l.* a-year, the revenue of that country, after a solemn treaty which contained a clause that if there were a surplus of revenue it should be paid to the credit of the kingdom of Oude; after having applied that surplus, contrary to that clause of the treaty, to the general

purposes of India; you now step in and you descend below the King, to every talookdar, to every landowner, large or small, to every man who has proprietary rights in the soil, to every man, the smallest and humblest capitalist who cultivates the soil—to every one of these you say in language that cannot be mistaken 'Come down from the independence and dignity you have held. As we have done in other provinces of India we shall do here. Two-thirds of you have not been mixed up in this war; but in this general confiscation the innocent must suffer with the guilty, for such is the misfortune of war, and such is the penalty which we shall inflict upon you.' Sir, if this Proclamation be not a Proclamation of unheard-of severity, how comes it that so many persons have protested against it? Does any man believe that the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich) understands this Proclamation better than the high military authorities who have so long known India? Does he suppose that the House of Commons will take his authority upon a matter of this kind in preference to the authority of the whole united press of India? ['Oh! oh!'] Well, I dare say that hon. Members who cry 'Oh!' have not read the newspapers of India upon the subject. Some of them uphold it because they say that at one fell swoop it has done that which it took us twenty years to do in other districts of India, and destroys every man who could influence the people against the British Government. Others say that it is a Proclamation of such a character that it must cause 'war to the knife' against the English, and that the Governor-General who issued such a Proclamation should have been prepared with a new army at his back that he might have power to enforce it.

The learned Gentleman the Attorney-General for Ireland referred in his speech the other night to what had been said by the hon. and learned Member for Devonport (Sir E. Perry) on the occasion of a question that I had put

some two or three weeks ago. Now I call the House to witness whether when I put the question which brought out this despatch, and when the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place and gave the answer that with respect to the policy of confiscation—for that is the only thing there is any dispute about in the Proclamation—the Government disavowed it in every sense—I call the House to witness whether every Gentleman present in this part of the House did not cheer that sentiment. Of course, every man cheered it. They would not have been men; they would not have been Englishmen; they would not have been legislators; they would have been men who had never heard of what was just and right, if every instinct within them, at the instant they heard the declaration of the Government, did not compel them to an enthusiastic assent. And it was only when the fatal influence of party, and the arts which party knows how to employ, were put in motion, that hon. Gentlemen began to discover that there was something serious and something dangerous in this memorable despatch. Now, I would ask the House this question—are we prepared to sanction the policy of that despatch?

I am very sorry that I have not done what only occurred to me after this debate commenced, and after the Amendment was proposed, or I should have proposed another Amendment to the House that went expressly upon that point, because—and I speak it without the smallest reference to the influence which it may have on any party in this House—I think it of the very highest consequence that, whatever decision we come to, it should be liable to no misinterpretation when it arrives in India. Then, Sir, we have been treated to a good deal of eloquence upon the manner of the despatch; and with regard to that I must say a word or two. The noble Lord the Member for London, who sits below me, has, I think, fallen into the error of most of the speakers in favour of the Resolution; that

is, of treating some of the outside circumstances of the case as if they were the case itself. I do not think, however, that he stated there was a word in the despatch which was not true, although he did express what I thought was rather an immoral sentiment for so eminent a statesman. The noble Lord told us that after a crime had been committed, men in office were never to let it be known or suspected that they thought it was a crime. [Lord John Russell: 'The hon. Gentleman is mistaken; I never said anything of the kind.'] I did not hear it myself, but I read it, and many of my friends came to the same conclusion. ['Oh! oh!'] Well, I understand, then, that he did not say it; but what he did say was, that there was a great deal of sarcasm and invective in the despatch, and he read a passage to show that such was the case. But the fact is that a great deal depends upon the reading. I could take a despatch of the noble Lord himself and read it in a manner that would perfectly astonish him. He said, if I am not mistaken, that if the House were to approve of that despatch as a proper despatch, then Lord Canning was not fit to occupy the meanest political or official situation. Indian despatches have, to my mind, never been very gentle. I recollect having read in *Mill's History of British India*, and in other histories also, despatches that have been sent from the President of the Board of Control, the Secret Committee, and the Court of Directors, over and over again; and I have thought that they were written in a tone rather more authoritative and rather more dictatorial than I should have been disposed to write, or than I should have been pleased to receive. It arose from this—that in old times the magnates sitting in Leadenhall-street were writing, not to Lord Canning and men of that altitude, but to merchants and agents whom they had sent out, who were entirely dependent upon them, and to whom they could say just what they liked; and for 100 years past, as far as I have seen, their despatches have had a character for severity, and that which men call

'dictatorial,' which I think might be very well dispensed with. But that is a matter which should certainly be taken into consideration, when a large portion of this House are disposed not only to censure Lord Ellenborough, but to overturn the Government, because a despatch is not written precisely in those gentle terms which some hon. Gentlemen think to be right when inditing a letter to a Governor-General of India.

There is one other point which I must notice, and that is the supposed effect of this despatch upon the feelings of Lord Canning. I am not so intimate with Lord Canning as many Members of this House, but I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and have always believed that he was one of the last men who would knowingly do anything that was inhuman or unjust, and that is my opinion now. I think he is to be commiserated, as any other man would have been who happened to be in India at such a time as this; and I think we are bound also to take a lenient view even of such errors as we may think he has committed. If I had gone to India, or into any service under the State, I should expect that there would be a general disposition to give me fair play in the exercise of my office, and that no strained construction to my injury would be put upon anything which I did. Well, that is the view which I entertain with regard to Lord Canning. I have never uttered a syllable against him in public, although I think that some of his acts have been open to great objection; and I am not about to say anything against him now. I would not support a Resolution which was intended to damage Lord Canning; and I think the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) has not done wrong in offering to the House the Amendment he has placed before us. But it is just possible that Lord Canning is in the midst of circumstances which have rendered it very difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to exercise his own calm judgment on the

great question which forms the subject of this Proclamation. I see in that Proclamation not so much an emanation from the humane and just mind of Lord Canning, as the offspring of that mixture of red tape and ancient tradition which is the foundation of the policy of the old civilian Council of Calcutta. But, Sir, if it were a question of hurting Lord Canning's feelings and denouncing this Proclamation, I could have no hesitation as to the choice which I should make. A man's private and personal feelings are not a matter of importance for the House when compared with the vast and permanent interests involved in the dangerous policy which we are now discussing. And I do not think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cardwell), the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich), and the noble Lord the Member for London, have any right to throw themselves into something like a contortion of agony with regard to the manner of this despatch; because, as was stated to the House the other night by the learned Attorney-General for Ireland, they did not tell us much about the feelings of another public servant, acting on behalf of the Crown at a still greater distance from England, when last year they gave a vote on the China question which pronounced a most emphatic condemnation on the conduct of Sir John Bowring. Now, I like fair play. I would treat Lord Canning as I would treat Sir John Bowring; and I would treat Sir John Bowring as I would treat Lord Canning. Do not let us have in the service of the State low-caste men who may be trampled upon at pleasure, and high-caste men whom nobody dare criticise.

I said, when I began, that this Resolution is important in reference to something else besides India; that it is important with reference to the position of parties in this House. I would ask the attention of the House for a few moments to that branch of the subject. I am afraid—and I hope I am not slandering anybody in saying it—that there

is quite as much zeal for what is called 'place' as there is for the good of India in the proposition brought before us. If that despatch had been published three months ago, when we were all sitting on that side of the House, it is very probable that many Gentlemen who now speak against it would have thought it a noble despatch, containing noble sentiments, expressed in noble language. But now, Sir, there has been for the last two months a growing irritation observable, particularly in this part of the House. There has been a feeling which no ingenuity has been able to disguise—a fear that if the present Government should, by some means or other, remain in office over the Session, no small difficulty would be found in displacing it—lest, like the tree, which, when first planted, may be easily pulled up, it should by and bye strike its roots downwards and its branches outwards, and after a year or two no man would be able to get it out of the ground. Hon. Gentlemen opposite know that I differ very widely from them on many public questions, and probably at some not distant day they may find it out in some act of severe hostility; but I put it to the House, whether, out of doors, the reputation of the present Government is not, in many respects, better than the last? Take, for instance, the Gentlemen who come up from the country on various deputations to the Ministers—the judgment of these deputations, without an exception, is in favour of the manner in which they have been received by the present Ministers, and of the way in which their suggestions and requests have been treated. Now, this may be no great matter, and I do not say that it is; but I make the observation for the benefit of the Gentlemen who sit on these benches, because it is just possible that they may some time have to receive deputations again. Then take their conduct in this House. 'Oh, yes,' hon. Gentlemen may say, 'but they are a weak Government; they have not a majority, and they are obliged to be very civil.' But what I maintain is, that every Ministry ought to be very civil, and what I am

prepared to assert is—and I ask every man on this side of the House if he does not agree with me, for I have heard dozens of them say it out of the House—that when the late Government were in office civility was a thing unknown.

Take another point—for it is worthy of consideration by Gentlemen on this side of the House, and I ask hon. Gentlemen who sit below the gangway especially to consider it—look at the heritage of trouble with regard to our foreign policy which the existing Government found on their accession to office. Three months of what was going on upon the Conspiracy Bill would have landed you on the very verge of a war, if not in a war, with France, and that danger has been avoided certainly by no concession which is injurious to the honour of England. Take the question which has agitated the public mind with regard to Naples. I am not going into any details; but so far as a Government could act, this Government appears to have acted with judgment. I think the noble Lord below me (Lord J. Russell) admitted that himself. I did not say that the noble Lord said anything against them. On the contrary, I rejoice to have him with me as a witness to what I am stating. With regard, then, to these questions, seeing the dilemma into which the foreign affairs of the country were brought under the last Administration, I think it is but fair, just, and generous that Members on this side of the House, at least, should take no course which wears the colour of faction, for the purpose of throwing the present Government out of office. Whenever I join in a vote to put Gentlemen opposite out of office, it shall be for something that the country will clearly understand—something that shall offer a chance of good to some portion of the British empire—something that shall offer a chance of advancing distinctly the great principles for which we—if we are a party at all on this side of the House—profess to care.

But there is another reason. Not only is it feared that

hon. Gentlemen opposite will get firm in their seats, but it is also feared that some hon. Gentlemen near me will get less firm in their alliance with the right hon. Gentlemen on this side. I have heard of mutinous meetings and discussions, and of language of the most unpardonable character uttered, as Gentlemen now say, in the heat of debate. But there was something more going on, which was traced to a meeting of independent Members recently held in Committee-room No. 11; and if a stop were not put to it, the powerful ranks on these benches might be broken up, which, if united, it was believed, would storm the Treasury benches and replace the late Government in office. I believe it was intended that a desperate effort should be made to change the state of things here before Whitsuntide That was a resolution which had been come to long before any one knew anything about Lord Ellenborough's despatch. And the present seems to be a convenient opportunity, inasmuch as it has this in its favour, that it appears to be defending an absent servant of the Crown; that it appears to be teaching a lesson to the Government who have acted injudiciously in publishing a despatch; altogether it has that about it which makes it an excellent pretext on which hon. Gentlemen may ride into office. Now, I do not speak to Whigs in office or to those Gentlemen who have been in office and expect to be in office again; but I should like to say what I believe to be true to those Gentlemen who call themselves independent Members, who come here with no personal object to serve, not seeking place, patronage, or favour, but with an honest desire, as far as they are able, to serve their country as Members of the House of Commons. If this Resolution be carried, it is supposed that the old Government, or something very like it, will come back again. Now, there was great discontent with that old Government before it went out; yet no pledge whatever has been given that its conduct will be better or different; no new measures

have been promised, no new policy has been avowed, no new men, that I have seen, have been held forth to the public very distinctly as likely to take high office in the State. There have been some things which I should think Members of this House must have felt pain at witnessing. There are newspapers in the interest of this ex-Treasury bench which have, in the most unblushing manner, published articles emanating from the pen of somebody who knew exactly what was wanted to be done. In the case of a gentleman, for example, who was engaged in Committee-room No. 11—a gentleman whom I need not mention because the House knows all the circumstances of this case, but a gentleman who took a most prominent part in the proceedings in that Committee-room—and no one is probably more indignant at what has been done than himself—those newspapers have positively fixed upon and designated him for a certain office, if the present Government go out and another comes in; another gentleman who seconded a Resolution on that occasion is also held up for an office; but they do not state exactly what his precise position is to be; and the glittering bauble of some place in the incoming Government is hung up before many hon. Gentlemen who sit around me. It is not said, 'It is for you,' and 'It is for you;' but it is hung up dangling before them all, and every man is expected to covet that glittering bauble.

But this is not all. These are not the only arts which are employed. Members of this House sitting below the gangway, who have been here for years—Gentlemen of the most independent character—receive flattering and beautifully engraved cards to great parties at splendid mansions; and not later than Friday last, of all times, those invitations were scattered, if not with a more liberal, no doubt with a much more discriminating hand than they ever were before. [An hon. Member: 'Absurd!'] Of course it is very absurd; there is no doubt about that, and that is precisely

why I am explaining it to the House. Why, Sir, if those cards of invitation contained a note with them, giving the exact history of what was really meant, it would say to hon. Gentlemen, 'Sir, we have measured your head, and we have gauged your soul, and we know or believe'—for I believe they do not know—'we believe that your principles which you came into Parliament to support—your character in the House—your self-respect will go for nothing if you have a miserable temptation like this held up before you.' Sir, if we could see them taking a course which is said to be taken by the celebrated horse-tamer, who appeals, as I am told, to the nobler and more intelligent instincts of the animal which he tames, then I should not complain. But they appeal to instincts which every honourable mind repudiates, and to aspirations which no hon. Gentleman on this side of the House can for a moment admit.

Well, then, if they succeed, what sort of a Government shall we have? I am as anxious for a Liberal Government as any man in this House, but I cannot believe that, in the present position of things on this side of the House, a Liberal and solid Government can be formed. We are told, and the whole country has been in a state of expectation and wonder upon it, that two eminent statesmen have actually dined together; and I am very glad to hear that men engaged in the strife of politics can dine together without personal hostility. I say nothing of the viands that were eaten. I say nothing of the beverage that was in the 'loving cup' that went round. One of our oldest and greatest poets has told us that—

'Nepenthe is a drink of soverayne grace.'

He says that it was devised by the gods to subdue contention, and subject the passions; but that it was given only to the aged and the wise, who were prepared by it to take their

places with ancient heroes in a higher sphere. But that could not have been the contents of the 'loving cup' in this instance, for these aged statesmen are still determined to cling to this world, and to mix, as heretofore, with all the vigour and the fire of youth in the turmoil and contention of public life. But does the fact of this dinner point to reconciliation, and to a firm and liberal administration? I believe that any such Government would be the worst of all coalitions. I believe that it would be built upon insincerity, and I suspect it would be of no advantage to the country. Therefore I am not anxious to see such a Government attempted.

I ask the House, then, are they prepared to overthrow the existing Government on the question which the right hon. Gentleman has brought before us—a question which he has put in such ambiguous terms? Are they willing in overthrowing that Government to avow the policy of this Proclamation for India? Are they willing to throw the country into all the turmoil of a general election—a general election at a moment when the people are but just slowly recovering from the effects of the most tremendous commercial panic that this country ever passed through? Are they willing to delay all legislation for India till next year, and all legislation on the subject of Parliamentary reform till the year after that? Are they willing, above all, to take the responsibility which will attach to them if they avow the policy contained in this Proclamation?

I confess, Sir, I am terrified for the future of India when I look at the indiscriminate slaughter which is now going on there. I have seen a letter, written, I believe, by a missionary, lately inserted in a most respectable weekly newspaper published in London, in which the writer estimates that 10,000 men have been put to death by hanging alone. I ask you, whether you approve of having in India such expressions as these, which I have taken this day from a

Calcutta newspaper, and which undoubtedly you will be held to approve if you do anything which can be charged with a confirmation of the tenor of this Proclamation. Here is an extract from *The Englishman*, which, speaking of the men of the disarmed regiments, who amount to some 20,000 or 30,000, or even 40,000 men, says :—

'There is no necessity to bring every Sepoy to a court-martial, and convict him of mutinous intentions before putting him down as guilty. We do not advocate extreme or harsh measures, nor are we of those who would drench the land with blood; but we have no hesitation in saying, that, were the Government to order the execution of all these Sepoys, they would be legally and morally justified in doing so. There would be no injustice done.'

No injustice would be done! I ask the House to consider that these men have committed no offence; their military functions were suspended because it was thought they were likely to be tempted to commit an offence, and therefore their arms were taken from them; and now an Englishman—one of your own countrymen—writing in a newspaper published in Calcutta, utters sentiments so atrocious as those which I have just read to the House. I believe the whole of India is now trembling under the action of volcanic fires; and we shall be guilty of the greatest recklessness, and I will say of great crime against the Monarchy of England, if we do anything by which we shall own this Proclamation. I am asked on this question to overturn Her Majesty's Government. The policy adopted by the Government on this subject is the policy that was cheered by hon. Members on this side when it was first announced. It is a policy of mercy and conciliation. False—may I not say?—or blundering leaders of this party would induce us, contrary to all our associations and all our principles, to support an opposite policy. I am willing to avow that I am in favour of justice and conciliation —of the law of justice and of kindness. Justice and mercy are the supreme attributes of the perfection which we call Deity, but all men everywhere comprehend them; there is

no speech nor language in which their voice is not heard, and they cannot be vainly exercised with regard to the docile and intelligent millions of India. You have had the choice. You have tried the sword. It has broken; it now rests broken in your grasp; and you stand humbled and rebuked. You stand humbled and rebuked before the eyes of civilized Europe. You may have another chance. You may, by possibility, have another opportunity of governing India. If you have, I beseech you to make the best use of it. Do not let us pursue such a policy as many men in India, and some in England, have advocated, but which hereafter you will have to regret, which can end only, as I believe, in something approaching to the ruin of this country, and which must, if it be persisted in, involve our name and nation in everlasting disgrace.

# INDIA.

## IV.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, AUGUST 1, 1859.

*From Hansard.*

[On August 1 Sir Charles Wood made his financial statement on India to the House of Commons. One of his proposals was that the Government should be empowered to raise 5,000,000*l.* in the United Kingdom in order to meet the demands of the present year. The Loan Bill passed through both Houses.]

I HAVE so often addressed the House upon the question of India that I feel some hesitation in asking a portion of the time of the Committee this evening. But notwithstanding an observation of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India that he does not see anything gloomy in the future of India, I confess that to my view the question assumes yearly a greater magnitude, and I may say a greater peril. I think, therefore, that having given some attention to this subject in years past, I may be permitted to bring my share, be its value more or less, to the attempt which we are now making to confront this great evil. When we recollect how insufficient are the statements which he has from India, the right hon. Gentleman has given us as clear an account of the finances of India as it was possible for him to do, and looking at them in the most favourable point of view we come to this

conclusion:—We have what we have had for twenty years, only more rapidly accumulating, deficit on deficit and debt on debt.

The right hon. Gentleman told the Committee that when he left the Government of India, I think in 1855, everything was in a most satisfactory condition. Well, it did happen in that year, perhaps by some of that kind of management which I have observed occasionally in Indian finance, that the deficit was brought down to a sum not exceeding 150,000*l.* [Sir C. Wood: 'There was a surplus of 400,000*l.*'] The deficit, I believe, before the mutiny was 143,000*l.* But, if the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to take the three years preceding the mutiny, I think that will give a much fairer idea of the real state of the case, and it is not the least use shutting our eyes to the real state of the case, because some day or other it will find us out, or we shall find it out. The real state of the case in the three years preceding the mutiny, 1855, 1856, and 1857, ending the 30th of April, is a deficit of 2,823,000*l.*, being an average not very far short of 1,000,000*l.* a-year. That is the state of things immediately after the right hon. Gentleman left office. I do not in the least find fault with him. He did not make the deficit, but I merely state this to show that things are not at the moment in that favourable state which the right hon. Gentleman would induce the Committee to believe. Keeping our attention to that period, there is another point of view, which is also very important. It appears to me that any Government must be an excessively bad Government which cannot defray its expenses out of the taxes which it levies on its people. We know, and every one has for years known, that in India there is a source of revenue, not from taxes levied on the people, but from opium, and which is very like the revenue derived by the Peruvian Government from guano. If we turn to those three years and see what relation the expenditure of the Government had to taxes levied on the people of

India, we shall find, though we may hear that the taxes are not so much as we imagine, or that the people are extremely poor, or that the Government is very extravagant—we shall find that the sum levied for the sale of opium and transit was no less than 10,500,000*l.*, and if we add that to the 2,800,000*l.*, we get a sum of 13,300,000*l.*, which is the exact sum which the Government of India cost in those three years over and above what was raised from the people by actual taxation. I say that this is a state of things which ought to cause alarm, because we know, and we find it stated in the last despatches, that the income derived from opium is of a precarious character, and from the variation of climate in India, or from a variation of policy in the Chinese Government, that revenue may suddenly either be very much impaired or be cut off altogether.

The right hon. Gentleman brings us to the condition in which we are now, and it may be stated in the fewest possible words to be this,—that the debt of India has been constantly rising, and that it amounts now to 100,000,000*l.* sterling. ['No, no!'] The right hon. Gentleman said 95,000,000*l.*, but he said there would be 5,000,000*l.* next year, and I will undertake to say that it is fair to argue on the basis that the debt of India at this moment is about 100,000,000*l.*, that there is a deficit of 12,000,000*l.* this year, and that there may be expected to be a deficit of 10,000,000*l.* next year. It is not to be wondered at that it should be difficult to borrow money on Indian account.

I am not surprised at the hon. Member for Kendal (Mr. Glyn) being so lively in the House to-night, and other hon. Gentlemen connected with the City, who, I understand, have been impressing on the Secretary of State the fact that money cannot be had in the City for the purpose for which he wants it. I do not wonder that it is difficult to raise money on Indian account. I should think it extraordinary if it could be borrowed without a high rate of interest. That it

can be borrowed at all can only arise from the fact that England, whatever disasters she gets into, generally contrives, by the blood of her soldiers or by the taxation of her people, to scramble through her difficulties, and to maintain before the world, though by enormous sacrifices, a character for good faith which is scarcely held by any other country in the world. With regard to the question of an Imperial guarantee, I take an opposite view from the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) on that particular point, though I agree with what he said as to certain expenses thrown on the Indian Government.

Last year I referred to the enormous expense of the Affghan war—about 15,000,000*l.*—the whole of which ought to have been thrown on the taxation of the people of England, because it was a war commanded by the English Cabinet, for objects supposed to be English, but which, in my opinion, were of no advantage either to England or India. It was most unjust that this enormous burden should have been thrown upon the finances of the Indian Government. But I do not oppose an Imperial guarantee because I particularly sympathize with the English taxpayers in this matter. I think the English taxpayers have generally neglected all the affairs of India, and might be left to pay for it. But there was no justice in imposing on the unfortunate millions of India the burden of a policy with which they had nothing to do, and which could not bring any one of them a single handful of rice more—it did bring them rather less than more—than they would have eaten without it. But I object to an Imperial guarantee on this ground,—if we let the Services of India, after exhausting the resources of India, put their hands into the pockets of the English people, the people of England having no control over the Indian expenditure, it is impossible to say to what lengths of unimagined extravagance they would go; and in endeavouring to save India may we not go far towards ruining England?

But look at this question of Indian finance from another

point of view. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India have both referred to the enormous amount of the whole taxation of India taken by the Military Service. I believe it has been shown that at this moment almost, if not altogether, the whole of the net revenue of India is being absorbed by the Military Service of that empire; that not a farthing is left out of the whole net revenue of India to pay the expenses of the civil government or the public creditor. If we leave out the opium duty, perhaps we shall see how far the Military Service bears on the taxation of India; we shall see that more than its net amount is absorbed by the Military Service. That is a state of things that has never existed in any other country or among any other people, for any considerable period, without bringing that country to anarchy and ruin. We have been told by the Governor-General that the great bulk of the revenue of India is not elastic; that with regard to the land-tax there has been for a long period no increase in it; that, on the contrary, that large source of income has decreased. He tells us, further, that the army cannot, at present, be largely reduced with safety. If so, what is the end to which we must come? Either the Government of India must come to an end, or England itself must become tributary to India. Seeing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has within the last fortnight asked 70,000,000*l.* of the English taxpayer for the expenses of the English Government, to ask nine or ten millions more for the government of India would certainly cause great dissatisfaction in this country. The picture is, to my mind, an alarming one, notwithstanding the cheerful view taken of it by the Secretary for India; and it has filled many besides myself with dismay.

Now, looking round for modes of escape from this position, I believe they exist, if we had the courage to adopt them. An hon. Friend has asked me, 'Is there nobody to tell the House of Commons the truth on this matter?' I might ask

why he has not done it himself. I suppose he is afraid of being thought rash; but his advice is, that the Government should re-establish the independence of the Punjab, recall the Ameers of Scinde, restore the Government of the King of Oude, giving to it the dependency of Nagpore. I confess, whether it be rash or not, that I think it would be wise to restore the Government of the Punjab and to give independence to that province which is called Scinde, because as no revenue is received from that part of the country in excess of the expense which its retention causes to this country, we should endeavour to bring our dominions in India within a reasonable and manageable compass. No policy can be more lunatic than the policy of annexation we have pursued of late years in India, and the calamity we are now meeting is the natural and inevitable consequence of the folly we have committed. It is not easy for great generals and statesmen who have been made earls and marquesses and had bronze statues put up in their honour in our public squares—it is not easy for the statesmen who have done all this to turn round and reverse it all; they have not the moral courage to do it; it might be an act of peril; it might appear a descent from the summit of empire and be wrongly construed throughout the world. But as a question of finance and good government we should, a few years hence, admit that it was a sound policy. But I will not pursue this subject, for I may fairly take it for granted that the House of Commons and the Government of England are not likely to take such a course till we are reduced to some extremity even greater than that which now meets us.

But there is another course that may fairly be recommended. It is to take India as it is, the empire with all your annexations as it stands, and to see if it is not possible to do something better with it than you have done before, and to give it a chance in future years of redeeming not only

the character of the Government but its financial and legislative position. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) says there cannot be any great diminution in the expenditure for the Civil Service of India; but I do not in the least agree with the Secretary for India when he says that the gentlemen of the Civil Service in that country are not overpaid. Every one knows that they are overpaid; except some very high-salaried bishops of whom we have heard, no men are so grossly overpaid as the officials of the Civil Service in India. The proof of this may be found everywhere. Look at the Island of Ceylon; there the duties are as arduous and the climate as unfavourable as in India; yet the Government does not pay its officials there more than one-half or two-thirds of the salaries they are paid in India. There are in India itself many hundreds of Europeans, the officers of the Indian army, all the Indian clergy, and missionaries; there are also English merchants, carrying on their business at rates of profit not much exceeding the profits made in this country. But the Civil Service of the Indian Government, like everything privileged and exclusive, is a pampered body; and, notwithstanding it has produced some few able men who have worthily done their duty, I do not think the Civil Service of India deserves the loud praise we have so frequently heard awarded to it by speakers in this House. Now if you could reduce the expense of the Civil Service by any considerable amount, the best thing you could do with the money would be to increase the establishment by sending a greater number of competent persons as magistrates, collectors, and officials into the distant provinces, and thereby double the facilities for good government in those districts. If you could reduce the income of the Civil Service one half, you could for the same money have a more efficient Service throughout India than at present. You might not save money, but you would get a more complete Service for it.

But the military question the House of Commons will

certainly have to take in hand; though Secretaries for India are afraid to grapple with it. I am not astonished that they feel some hesitation in doing so, for from every one connected with the Military Service they would hear the strongest objections to reducing the number of the troops. But let me ask the Committee to consider what it has just heard. Before the Revolt the European troops in India numbered 45,000 and the Native troops 250,000; now the 45,000 European troops are 110,000, and the 250,000 Native soldiers are raised to 300,000. What was it that we heard during the Indian mutiny; what was the cause of all the letters that appeared in the newspapers? Every man said that the great evil was having a Native army far larger than was required. That has been the source of peril, and that was the real cause of the mutiny. Now we have even a larger portion of this most perilous element than we had before. The authorities of India do not appear to have learnt anything from the mutiny, or they have learnt that all that was said in this House and in this country was untrue, because they have 50,000 more Native troops than they had before the mutiny. Therefore, the mode of argument appears to be this:—A Native army was the cause of the mutiny, the cause of all our perils, and now it is necessary to have more of it; and, as that is the perilous element, of course 45,000 troops are not sufficient to keep them in check; therefore, you have at present 110,000; and certain officers who were examined, and the Commissioners who reported, recommended that you should always have at least 80,000 Europeans there. If we are only to have one body of troops to watch another, it seems to me there can be no hope of any diminution of our military force, nor any real reduction in our expenditure. Why is it that you require all this army? Let me ask the Committee to look at the matter as sensible men of business. The Revolt, which has been such a terrible affair, has been suppressed. It was suppressed mainly by the

45,000 men in India, and not by the 110,000 you have succeeded in placing there at a later period. More than that, there is not at the present moment any alarming amount of dissatisfaction in India, or at least the dissatisfied are dispirited, and have lost all hope of resisting the power of England, and must for a long period, I think, remain wholly dispirited. At the same time, you have disarmed the people over a vast province. There are millions of people in India, a great number of whom were previously in possession of arms, who do not now possess a single weapon. I have seen in the last accounts, only a day or two since, a statement that not less than 1,400 forts in the kingdom of Oude alone have been destroyed, and we know that many more have been destroyed in other parts. There is at this moment no power for combined organized armed resistance against you, except that which is in the Native army, which the Indian Government has been building up of late to a greater extent than ever.

The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) spoke of one point—the great importance of which I admit—the want of confidence and sympathy that must have arisen between the two races in consequence of the transactions of the last two years. The shock of revolt must have created great suspicion and hatred and fear, and there is nothing out of which panic grows so easily as out of those conditions. I believe that is the case in India, and perhaps there are indications of something of the kind at home. There is a panic, therefore, and neither the Governor-General nor the Civil Service nor military officers can make up their minds that they are safe, recollecting the transactions of the past two years, in having a less military force than we now have in India. But if you ask those gentlemen they will never say they have enough. There are admirals here, as we know, who are perfectly wild about ships, with whom arithmetic on such a question goes for nothing. They would show you in the clearest possible

manner that you have not ships enough. So also, although I am glad to find not to the same extent, as to troops. Some one said the other night, in answer to an hon. Gentleman, about an increased force of a particular kind, 'There is nothing like leather,' and it is so. I say naval officers and military officers are not the men to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer should depute the great and solemn duty of determining what amount shall be expended for military purposes. There is not a country in the world that would not have been bankrupt long since, and plunged into irretrievable ruin, if the military authorities had been allowed to determine the amount of military force to be kept up, and the amount of revenue to be devoted to that purpose.

I have another objection to this great army, and I now come to the question of policy, which, I am sorry to say for India, has not been touched upon. I do not think this is a question to be merely settled by a very clever manner of giving the figures of the case. Those figures depend upon the course you intend to pursue, upon the policy which the Government intends to adopt, in that country. With this great army two things are certain—we can have no reform of any kind in the Government of India, nor an improved conduct on the part of the English in India towards the Natives of India. With a power like this—110,000 English troops, with an English regiment within an hour's reach of each civil servant, you will find that the supremacy of the conquering race will be displayed in the most offensive manner.

Everybody connected with India—the hon. Member for Devonport (Sir Erskine Perry), the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Colonel Sykes)—all who are connected with India, know well that when the English were feeble in India, when they had not a great army in the field or a great revenue to support it, every Englishman treated the Natives by whom he was surrounded rather with the feeling that he was an intruder in the country, and that it was not

only proper but absolutely necessary to deal in a conciliatory and just manner with the great body of the Natives of India; but precisely as our power increased the conduct of our countrymen changed, and I find in the excellent book of Mr. Shore that thirty years ago he describes this as the very source of the growing ill feeling between the races in India. It has grown from that time to this, until we have an irritation and animosity which in our time, it may be, we shall see very little removed, and which may perhaps never be wholly allayed. A Government, then, with this vast army, must always be in a difficulty. Lord Canning—lord anybody else—cannot turn his attention to anything but this wearing, exasperating question of how money is to be got for the next quarter to pay this army. He cannot turn his attention in any way to reforms, and I am convinced that this House must insist upon the Government reducing its army, whatever be the risk. A large army will render it impossible for you to hold the country, for you will have a constantly increasing debt, and anarchy must inevitably overwhelm you in the end. A small army, a moderate, conciliatory, and just Government, with the finances in a prosperous condition;—and I know not but that this country may possess for generations and centuries a share, and a large share, in the government of those vast territories which it has conquered.

As to measures of reduction, I admit that it is of little use attempting them unless they are accompanied by other changes. Here I have a charge to bring against the Indian Government. I did hope when the noble Lord spoke to-night that he would have told us something which I am sure he must have known; that there is no such thing as a real Government in India at all; that there is no responsibility either to a public opinion there, or to a public opinion at home; and that therefore we cannot expect a better policy or happier results. Let hon. Gentlemen imagine a Government like that in India, over

which the payers of the taxes have not the slightest control; for the great body of the people in India have, as we all know, no control in any way over the Government. Neither is there any independent English opinion that has any control over the Government, the only opinions being those of the Government itself, or those of the Military and Civil Services, and chiefly of the latter. They are not the payers of taxes; they are the spenders and the enjoyers of the taxes, and therefore the Government in India is in the most unfortunate position possible for the fulfilment of the great duties that must devolve upon every wise and just Government. The Civil Service, being privileged, is arrogant, and I had almost said tyrannous, as any one may see who reads the Indian papers, which mainly represent the opinion of that Service and the Military Service, which, as everywhere else where it is not checked by the resolution of the taxpayers and civilians, is clamorous and insatiable for greater expenditure. The Governor-General himself, —and I do not make any attack upon Lord Canning, although I could conceive a Governor-General more suited to his great and difficult position,—he is a creature of these very Services.

I now ask the noble Lord to remember a case which happened during the time he held office, and if the Committee will allow me, for the sake of illustration, to refer to it, I do not think it will be any waste of time. Hon. Gentlemen will recollect that during the last year, my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. J. B. Smith), who has paid great attention to Indian subjects, put a question to the noble Lord relating to the annexation of a small territory called Dhar. What has been the course of events in relation to that case? The news of the annexation reached this country on the 20th of March last year. Upon the 23rd the question was put in this House, when the hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Baillie), then Under-Secretary, replied, that the Government had just been informed of it by

the Governor-General, and that he was solely responsible for the act, the Government here having had no previous communication upon it. Upon the 11th of June the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) announced to the House, in answer to a question, that he had disallowed the annexation of Dhar. The despatch disallowing it has since been laid upon the table. It is dated June 22, and it asks for information from the Governor-General. In India they assumed this unfortunate Rajah to be guilty of misdemeanour, because his troops had revolted, and the noble Lord in his despatch said, as I think very sensibly, 'If we cannot keep our own troops, what argument is it for overturning the independence of the territory of Dhar, seeing that the Rajah himself has been faithful towards us, but his troops have rebelled?' The noble Lord asked for further information. In the preceding April the Ranee, the mother or step-mother of the Rajah, a mere boy of thirteen, sent two memorials to the Governor-General, one by post, and the other through the local British officer, remonstrating against the annexation, and proving, as far as she could, that the Rajah had not been guilty of any wrong against us. This memorial was not acknowledged until August, when the Secretary for the Government of India desired the Ranee to forward the memorial through the Governor-General's agent in Central India. In April these papers were laid upon the table of the House with one exception. The Ranee's memorial was not included in those papers.

Now, when those papers were laid before the House, why was not that memorial, relating to the annexed territory, sent home and printed with the other papers, so that hon. Members of this House might have read it? The letter of the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) was dated the 22nd of June, 1858, and to this hour it has never been answered. The noble Lord's despatch disallowed the annexation; it condemned it, and asked for information. From the date of

that despatch to this present 1st of August, 1859, there has not come any official information from the Governor-General as to what he has done, or any answer to the noble Lord's despatch, although sixteen months have elapsed. I say it is not fitting that the Secretary of State for India should be treated with utter disregard, if not with something like contempt, by any great satrap who happens to be sent out to govern any of the provinces of this country. This very case shows, that in the midst of the terrible hurricane of the mutiny, the thirst for annexation was unslaked. At the very moment, or just before, that the Queen issued her gracious Proclamation here, the Government in India annexed the territory of this Rajah, a boy of thirteen years of age, manifesting at the same time an utter disregard of the Government at home and the just sentiments, if they could have been ascertained, of the whole body of the people of this country. And this must be so as long as you have a Government like that of Calcutta. Procrastination is its very nature.

The noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) did an excellent thing. He did honour to himself by appointing a man of a new sort as Governor of Madras. I have not much acquaintance with Sir C. Trevelyan, but I believe him to be a very intelligent man and very earnest for the good of India. But he finds that at Madras he is like a man who is manacled, as all the Governors are. He is able to do almost nothing. But he has a spirit above being the passive instrument for doing nothing in the hands of the Governor-General, and he has been disposed to make several changes which have looked exceedingly heterodox to those who are connected with the old Government of India, and which have shocked the nerves of the fifteen old gentlemen who meet in Leadenhall-street, and their brethren in India. I find that among the changes endeavoured to be effected by Sir C. Trevelyan, the following are enumerated:—He has endeavoured to conciliate the

Natives by abolishing certain ceremonial distinctions which were supposed to degrade them when visiting the Government House; he has shown that personal courtesy to them which appears to be too much neglected in India; he has conspicuously rewarded those who have rendered services to the State; he has made one of the Natives his aide-de-camp; he has endeavoured to improve the land tenure, to effect a settlement of the Enam, and to abolish the impress of cattle and carts. He has also abolished three-fourths, or perhaps more, of the paper work of the public servants. He also began the great task of judicial reform, than which none is more urgently pressing. But what is said of Sir C. Trevelyan for instituting these reforms? He has raised a hornets' nest about him. Those who surround the Governor-General at Calcutta say, 'We might as well have the Governors of the Presidencies independent, if they are to do as they like without consulting the Governor-General as has been done in past times.' The *Friend of India* is a journal not particularly scrupulous in supporting the Calcutta Government, but it has a horror of any Government of India except that of the Governor-General and the few individuals who surround him. A writer in the *Friend of India* says:—

'Sir C. Trevelyan relies doubtless on Lord Stanley, and we do not dream of denying that the Secretary of State has provocation enough to excuse the unusual course he seems obliged to pursue. To send a reform to Calcutta is, at present, simply to lay it aside. It will probably not even be answered for two years, certainly not carried in five. Even when sanctioned, it will have to pass through a crucible through which no plan can escape entire. That weary waiting for Calcutta, of which all men, from Lord Stanley to the people of Singapore, now bitterly complain, may well tempt the Secretary to carry on his plans by the first mode offered to his hand.'

Here are only a dozen lines from a long article, and there are other articles in the same paper to the same purport. I think, then, that I am justified in condemning any Secretary for India who contents himself with giving us the figures necessary to show the state of the finances, which any clerk in the

office could have done, and abstains from going into the questions of the government of India and that policy upon which alone you can base any solid hope of an improvement in the condition of that country.

There is another point I would mention. The Governor-General of India goes out knowing little or nothing of India. I know exactly what he does when he is appointed. He shuts himself up to study the first volumes of Mr. Mill's *History of India*, and he reads through this laborious work without nearly so much effect in making him a good Governor-General as a man might ignorantly suppose. He goes to India, a country of twenty nations, speaking twenty languages. He knows none of those nations, and he has not a glimmer of the grammar and pronunciation or meaning of those languages. He is surrounded by half-a-dozen or a dozen gentlemen who have been from fifteen to forty years in that country, and who have scrambled from the moderate but sure allowance with which they began in the Service to the positions they now occupy. He knows nothing of the country or the people, and they are really unknown to the Government of India. To this hour the present Governor-General has not travelled through any considerable portion of the territory of India. If he did, he would have to pay an increased insurance upon his life for travelling through a country in which there are very few roads and no bridges at all. Observe the position, then, in which the Governor-General is placed. He is surrounded by an official circle, he breathes an official air, and everything is dim or dark beyond it. You lay duties upon him which are utterly beyond the mental or bodily strength of any man who ever existed, and which he cannot therefore adequately perform.

Turning from the Governor-General to the Civil Service, see how short the period is in which your servants in that country remain in any particular office. You are constantly criticising the bad customs of the United States, where every

postmaster and many other officers lose their situations, and where others are appointed whenever a new President is elected. You never make blunders like the United States, and you will therefore be surprised at a statement given in evidence by Mr. Underhill, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society. He says that in certain districts in Bengal there are three or four Englishmen to 1,000,000 inhabitants, and that the magistrates are perpetually moving about. I have here the names of several gentlemen cited. Mr. Henry Lushington went to India in 1821, and remained till 1842. During these twenty-one years he filled twenty-one different offices; he went to Europe twice, being absent from India not less than four and a quarter years. Upon an average, therefore, he held his twenty-one offices not more than nine months each. Mr. J. P. Grant was Governor of Bengal. That was so good a place that he remained stationary in it. But he went to India in 1828 and remained there until 1841. In those thirteen years he held twenty-four different situations, being an average of less than six months for each. Mr. Charles Grant—and I may say that Grant is a name which for three or four generations has been found everywhere in India,—he was in India from 1829 to 1842, and in those thirteen years he filled seventeen offices, being an average of only eight months for each office. Mr. Halliday, Governor of Bengal, went to India in 1825, and remained until 1843. In those eighteen years he held twenty-one offices, and he did not become stationary until he was accredited to the lucrative and great office of Governor of Bengal.

I think these facts show that there is something in the arrangements of the Indian Government which makes it no Government at all, except for the purpose of raising money and spending taxes. It is no Government for watching over the people and conferring upon them those blessings which we try to silence our consciences by believing the British Government is established in India to promote.

What can a Governor-General do with such a Council, and with servants who are ever changing in all the departments? I am not stating my own opinion, but what is proved by the blue-books. Mr. Halliday stated that the police of Bengal were more feared than the thieves and dacoits. But how is this Government, so occupied and so embarrassed, to be expected to put the police on a satisfactory footing? With regard to justice, I might appeal to any gentleman who has been in India whether, for the most part, the Judges in the Company's Courts are not without training, and if they are without training, whether they will not probably be without law. The delay is something of which we can have no conception, even with our experience of the Court of Chancery in this country. Perjury and wrong are universal wherever the Courts of the Company's Service have been established in India. Of their taxation we hear enough to-night. It is clumsy and unscientific. In their finance there is such confusion that the Government proposes to send out somebody, not to raise revenue, not to spend it, but somebody who will be able to tell you how it is raised and spent, for that is what you want to know. They have no system of book-keeping whatever. The Secretary of State gives us a statement of revenue and expenditure up to the 30th of April, 1858, sixteen months back, and even for the year preceding he can only furnish what he calls an 'estimate.' Would any other Legislative Assembly in the whole world, except this, tolerate such a state of things? I did try myself several years ago to get a statement of the accounts up to a later period; but I found it was of no use. They ought to be brought up to a later period; the thing is quite within the range of possibility; it is simply not done because there is no proper system of book-keeping, and no one responsible for not doing it.

You have no Government in India; you have no financial statement; you have no system of book-keeping; no responsibility; and everything goes to confusion and ruin because

there is such a Government, or no Government, and the English House of Commons has not taken the pains to reform these things. The Secretary of State to-night points to the increase in the English trade. In that trade I am myself interested, and I am delighted to see that increase; but it should be borne in mind that just now it is not a natural increase, and therefore not certain to be permanent. If you are spending so many millions in railroads and in carrying on war—that is, 22,000,000*l.* for your armaments in India instead of 12,000,000*l.*—is not that likely to make a great difference in your power to import more largely from this country? Do not we know that when the Government of the day was pouring English treasure into the Crimea the trade with the Levant was most materially increased? And, therefore, I say it will be a delusion for the right hon. Gentleman to expect that the extraordinary increase which has taken place within the last three years will go on in future in the same proportion.

Now, the point which I wish to bring before the Committee and the Government is this, because it is on this that I rely mainly—I think I may say almost entirely—for any improvement in the future of India. It would be impertinent to take up the time of the Committee by merely cavilling at what other people have said, and pointing out their errors and blunders, if I had no hope of being able to suggest any improvement in the existing state of things. I believe a great improvement may be made, and by a gradual progress that will dislocate nothing. I dare say it may disappoint some individuals, but where it will disappoint one man in India it will please a thousand. What you want is to de-centralize your Government. I hold it to be manifestly impossible to govern 150,000,000 of persons, composing twenty different nations, speaking as many different languages, by a man who knows nothing of India, assisted by half-a-dozen councillors belonging to a privileged order,

many of whom have had very little experience in India, except within narrow limits, and whose experience never involved the consideration and settlement of great questions of statesmanship. If you could have an independent Government in India for every 20,000,000 of its people, I do not hesitate to say, though we are so many thousand miles away, that there are Englishmen who, settling down among those 20,000,000 of people, would be able to conduct the Government of that particular province on conditions wholly different and immeasurably better than anything in the way of administration which we have ever seen in India.

If I were Secretary of State for India,—but as I am not, I will recommend the right hon. Gentleman to do that which I would do myself, or I would not hold his office for one month; because, to hold office and come before the House Session after Session with a gloomy statement, and with no kind of case to show that you are doing anything for India, or that you are justified in holding possession of it at all, is nothing but to receive a salary and to hold a dignity without any adequate notion of the high responsibility attaching to them. I am not blaming the right hon. Gentleman in particular; he is only doing what all his predecessors before him have done. There has been no real improvement since I have sat in Parliament in the government of India, and I believe the Bill of last year is not one whit better for purposes of administration than any that has gone before. But I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman, whether it would not be a good thing to bring in a Bill to extend and define the powers of the Governors of the various Presidencies in India? I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman to turn out the fifteen gentlemen who assist him in Leadenhall-street to vegetate on their pensions, but I ask him to go to India and to take the Presidency of Madras for an instance. Let arrangements be made by which that Presidency shall be in a position to correspond directly with

him in this country, and let every one connected with that Government of Madras feel that, with regard to the interests and the people of that Presidency, they will be responsible for their protection. At present there is no sort of tie between the governors and the governed. Why is it that we should not do for Madras what has been done for the Island of Ceylon? I am not about to set up the Council of Ceylon as a model institution—it is far from that; but I will tell you what it is, and you will see that it would not be a difficult thing to make the change I propose. The other day I asked a gentleman holding an office in the Government, and who had lived some years in Ceylon, what was the state of the Council? He said it was composed of sixteen members, of whom six were non-official and independent, and the Governor had always a majority. He added that at the present moment in that Council there was one gentleman, a pure Cingalese by birth and blood, another a Brahmin, another a half-caste, whose father was a Dutchman and whose mother was a Native, and three others who were either English merchants or planters. The Council has not much *prestige*, and therefore it is not easy to induce merchants in the interior to be members and to undertake its moderate duties; but the result is that this Cingalese, this Brahmin, this half-caste, and these three Englishmen, although they cannot out-vote Sir H. Ward, the Governor, are able to discuss questions of public interest in the eye and the ear of the public, and to tell what the independent population want, and so to form a representation of public opinion in the Council, which I will undertake to say, although so inefficient, is yet of high importance in the satisfactory government of that island. Why is it that we can have nothing like this in the Councils of Madras or Bombay? It would be an easy thing to do, and I believe that an Act of Parliament which would do it would lay the foundation of the greatest reform that has yet taken place in India. At

present all the Governors are in fetters; and I see that blame has been imputed to Sir Charles Trevelyan for endeavouring to break through those fetters. No doubt an attempt will be made to have him recalled, but I hope that the right hon. Gentleman, while he moderates the ardour of the Governor so far as to prevent a rebellion among the civilians, will support him honestly and faithfully in all those changes which the right hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do are essential to the improvement of the government of that country.

There is yet another question, and that is, what is to be done with regard to the people of India on the subject of education, and especially with reference to the matter of religious instruction? I beg the right hon. Gentleman to be cautious how he takes the advice of any gentleman in this country, who may ask him to make changes in the established order of things there by appearing in the slightest degree to attempt to overthrow the caste and religion of the Natives of India. I have here an extract from a letter written by a gentleman who was present at one of the ceremonies of reading the Queen's Proclamation in November last. He says:—

'Not less than 7,000 Natives of all ranks and conditions and religions flocked to the esplanade at Tellicherry, where there was no show but the parading of a company of Sepoys, who fired a *feu de joie* very badly, to hear the Queen's Proclamation read. All who heard, all who heard not, manifested the deepest interest in it. The pledged inviolability of their religion and their lands spread like wildfire through the crowd, and was soon in every man's mouth. Their satisfaction was unbounded. . . . I mentioned that I went to Tellicherry to hear the Queen's Proclamation read. We have since had it read here (Anjarakandy). You will see an account of what took place on the occasion in the accompanying copy of an official report I addressed to the assistant-magistrate. What I have described understates the feeling manifested by the people. They were all eyes and ears, listening breathlessly to what was being read. You will observe that convening them for any public purpose whatever, except here, was a thing unknown, and would have been a thing scouted under the Company's Government. Here I always assemble them, communicate everything they ought to know and hear, and talk it over with them. But a Queen's Proclamation is not an every-day affair, so they came in crowds, and I will venture to say that there is not another place in the Queen's India

where it was so clearly explained to them or so thoroughly understood. But the impartial toleration of their religion and caste was the be all and end-all of their comments, praise, and individual satisfaction. One Mahtta said, "They had had scores of proclamations upon every conceivable subject, but never one so wise and sensible as this."

The East India Company was a wonderful Company for writing despatches. There was nothing so Christian as their doctrine, nothing so unchristian as their conduct. That Proclamation has in it the basis of all you should aim at in future in India—a regard to the sacredness of their property, and the sacredness of their religion, and an extension to them of as regular and full justice as is shown to your own countrymen. Depend upon it these Natives of India can comprehend this as well as we comprehend it; and, if you treat them as we are treated, and as they ought to be treated, you will not require 400,000 men to help you to govern a people who are notoriously among the most industrious and most peaceable to be found on the face of the earth. There has lately been an act done by the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) to which I must allude. Why he did it I do not know. I am sure the noble Lord did not mean to do an act of injustice—though very great injustice has been done. A question was put the other night about a Native of India who had come to this country to qualify himself for entering into competition for employment in the Civil Service of his country. I have seen that young gentleman, and conversed with him; and when I state his case, it will be seen whether he has been treated well or wisely, though the regulation under which he has suffered may have been made without any reference to him individually. He arrived in this country in June, 1856, and remained preparing himself for competition for two years and a-half till December, 1858, when a new regulation came out, which made twenty-two instead of twenty-three years of age the period for entering the Civil Service. He might have been ready for competition in July, 1860, but he could not

be ready in July, 1859. Under these circumstances he would be past the age of twenty-two before he could be able to present himself for examination. The consequence is, that he has been obliged to turn himself to another channel for employment. His father is an assistant-builder in the Government dockyard of Bombay, and has been in England. There was great interest excited among the Natives when the young man left India to come to England, and there is great disappointment among his friends at the result. He has been laughed at for trusting the Government, and it is said that while Government go on changing their regulations in this way no faith can be put in them. Now this is the first case of this kind that has happened. This young gentleman (or his father) has expended 1,500*l.* in coming here and in endeavouring to get the best education, solely with a view to be suited for the Civil Service. If he had entered into that Civil Service a great thing would have been accomplished. The result would have been that the House and the Secretary for India would have seen that it was very unjust, while the son of any one here could pursue his studies at home and enter into competition for the Civil Service, that the sons of the Natives of India who wish to enter into the service of their own country must come thousands of miles at great expense, and live apart from their families for years, before they are able to accomplish their object, and the result must have been that you would have established in some city in India the same mode of examination that you have established here. You must have been led to do that which would have enabled young men in India to offer themselves for the Civil Service of their country on as favourable terms as could be done in England. I am sure the noble Lord never had the slightest idea of the regulation having reference to this young man, or of injuring him; yet it has been done, and what has occurred leads to the conclusion that either somebody very deep in these matters has been at the

bottom of this change, or that some combination of unfortunate circumstances has been at work, by which that which we have all so much at heart has been retarded. If the noble Lord had struck out this regulation, or made a new one, by which this young man could have had a chance of going home as a servant of the Civil Service, the fact would have been worth many regiments of soldiers in India.

In speaking on this subject I have nothing new to offer to the attention of the House. I have propounded the very same theories and remedies years ago. They are not my remedies and theories. I am not the inventor of local government for India; but the more I have considered the subject—the more I have discussed it with the Members of this House and with gentlemen connected with India—the more I am convinced that you will not make a single step towards the improvement of India unless you change your whole system of government—unless you give to each Presidency a government with more independent powers than are now possessed by it. What would be thought if the whole of Europe was under one governor, who knew only the language of the Feejee Islands, and that his subordinates were like himself, only more intelligent than the inhabitants of the Feejee Islands are supposed to be? You set a governor over 150,000,000 of human beings, in a climate where the European cannot do the work he has to do so well as here, where neither the moral nor physical strength of the individual is equal to what it is at home,—and you do not even always furnish the most powerful men for the office;—you seem to think that the atmosphere will be always calm and the sea always smooth. And so the government of India goes on; there are promises without number of beneficial changes, but we never heard that India is much better or worse than before. Now, that is not the way to do justice to a great empire like India. If there had been a better government in India, the late disturbances among your own troops would

not have happened; and I own I tremble when I reflect that every post may bring us, in the present temper of the European troops in India, some dire intelligence of acts which they may have committed, because they may think that this is a convenient opportunity for pressing some great claim of their own.

I beg the Committee to consider this matter, notwithstanding that the right hon. Gentleman is not disposed to take a gloomy view of the state of India. Look at your responsibilities. India is ruled by Englishmen, but remember that in that unfortunate country you have destroyed every form of government but your own; that you have cast the thrones of the Natives to the ground. Princely families, once the rulers of India, are now either houseless wanderers in the land they once called their own, or are pensioners on the bounty of those strangers by whom their fortunes have been overthrown. They who were noble and gentle for ages are now merged in the common mass of the people. All over those vast regions there are countless millions, helpless and defenceless, deprived of their natural leaders and their ancient chiefs, looking with only some small ray of hope to that omnipresent and irresistible Power by which they have been subjected. I appeal to you on behalf of that people. I have besought your mercy and your justice for many a year past; and if I speak to you earnestly now, it is because the object for which I plead is dear to my heart. Is it not possible to touch a chord in the hearts of Englishmen, to raise them to a sense of the miseries inflicted on that unhappy country by the crimes and the blunders of our rulers here? If you have steeled your hearts against the Natives, if nothing can stir you to sympathy with their miseries, at least have pity upon your own countrymen. Rely upon it the state of things which now exists in India must, before long, become most serious. I hope that you will not show to the world that, although your fathers conquered the country, you have not the ability to govern it.

You had better disencumber yourselves of the fatal gift of empire than that the present generation should be punished for the sins of the past. I speak in condemnatory language, because I believe it to be deserved. I hope that no future historian will have to say that the arms of England in India were irresistible, and that an ancient empire fell before their victorious progress,—yet that finally India was avenged, because the power of her conqueror was broken by the intolerable burdens and evils which she cast upon her victim, and that this wrong was accomplished by a waste of human life and a waste of wealth which England, with all her power, was unable to bear.

# INDIA.

## V.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 19, 1861.

*From Hansard.*

[Mr. Dunlop brought forward a motion to inquire into the discrepancies between certain sets of documents, relating to the Affghan war of 1837–8. It appeared that some passages in the despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes had been mutilated, in order to make it appear that he advised a policy which he really condemned. Mr. Dunlop moved for a Committee to inquire into this alleged mutilation of despatches presented to the House. The motion was negatived.]

WHEN the noble Lord rose, I observed, from his countenance and from his language, that he seemed to be suffering from the passion of anger. [Viscount Palmerston: 'Not much.'] 'Not much,' the noble Lord says. I admit that in the course of his speech he calmed down; but he was so far led from what I think was a fair course as to charge the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced this Motion with making a violent and vituperative speech, and he spoke of 'that vocabulary of abuse of which the hon. Gentleman appeared to be master.' Now, I will undertake to say that I am only speaking the opinion of every Gentleman in the House who heard the speech which introduced this question, when I say that there has rarely been delivered here on any subject a speech more strictly logical, more judicially calm, and more admirable

than that which we have heard to-night from the hon. and learned Member for Greenock. But the fact is the noble Lord felt himself hit.

The noble Lord is on his trial in this case; and on that account I expect that at the conclusion of the debate he will not feel himself at liberty to object to the appointment of this Committee. After a few sentences the noble Lord touched upon the case of Sir Alexander Burnes, and he made a very faint denial of the misrepresentations which are charged against the Government of that day in the case of that gentleman. But he went on to say that, after all, these things were of no importance; that what was in, or what was left out, was unimportant. But I should like to ask the noble Lord what was the object of the minute and ingenious, and I will say unmatched care which was taken in mutilating the despatches of a gentleman whose opinions were of no importance and whose writings could not make the slightest difference either to the question or to the opinions of any person concerned? The noble Lord, too, has stooped to conduct which, if I were not in this House, I might describe in language which I could not possibly use here without being told that I was transgressing the line usually observed in discussions in this assembly. The noble Lord has stooped so low as to heap insult, throughout the whole of his speech, upon the memory of a man who died in the execution of what he believed to be his public duty—a duty which was thrust upon him by the mad and obstinate policy of the noble Lord; and whilst his blood cries to Heaven against that policy, the noble Lord, during a three-quarters of an hour's speech in this House, has scarcely ceased to heap insult on his memory.

What the noble Lord told us throughout his speech was that Sir Alexander Burnes was a man of the greatest simplicity of character. I could not, however complimentary I were disposed to be, retort that upon the noble Lord. He

says that Sir Alexander Burnes—of whom he spoke throughout in the most contemptuous manner—an eminent political agent at the Court of Dost Mahommed, was beguiled by the treachery of that Asiatic ruler; that he took everything for truth which he heard, and that, in point of fact, he was utterly unfit for the position which he held at Cabul. But although the noble Lord had these despatches before him, and knew all the feelings of Sir Alexander Burnes, he still continued Sir Alexander Burnes there. He was there two years after these despatches were written, in that most perilous year when not only himself but the whole army —subjects of the Queen—fell victims to the policy of the noble Lord. Now, I must tell the noble Lord what my hon. and learned Friend, the Member for Greenock, did not discuss, and what the Committee is not to do—because every Member who heard the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Greenock, and those who listened to the speech of the noble Lord, must have seen that from the first the noble Lord evaded the whole question. He endeavoured to lead the House to believe that my hon. and learned Friend was going into some antiquarian researches about the policy of the English or the Indian Government twenty years ago, and that it was proposed to have a Committee to dig up all the particulars of our supposed peril from the designs of Russia at that time. But the fact is that my hon. and learned Friend had no such intention; and there was no man in the House more cognizant of that fact than the noble Lord when he ingeniously endeavoured to convey a contrary impression to the House.

It is not proposed to go into the policy of the war. And there is another question that it is not proposed to go into. It is not proposed to inquire whether Sir Alexander Burnes or Lord Auckland was Governor-General. We know that Lord Auckland was Governor-General; but we know that a Governor-General who may be many hundreds, or in India,

perhaps, 2,000 miles away from the place where particular events are transpiring, must rely to a considerable extent on the information he receives from the political agent who is on the spot. If this be so, clearly what Sir Alexander Burnes thought, and what he said, and what he wrote, is of some importance. At least, if the House of Commons has any evidence placed before it, the noble Lord will agree that in a great question like this—I am not speaking of the present time, but of the time when these events happened—it is of first-rate importance that the House should have evidence not on one side only, but on both sides. There is another thing we do not propose to inquire into, and that is the policy of Russia at that time. I cannot very well understand the course which the noble Lord has taken on this point; for I find that about twelve months after the writing of these very despatches, the mutilation of which is now complained of, the noble Lord made a reply to the Russian Minister who had declared that there was nothing whatever hostile to England in the instructions which were furnished to Vicovich. He says—

'There has not existed the smallest design hostile to the English Government, nor the smallest idea of endangering the tranquillity of the British possessions in India.

The noble Lord, in reply to that, on the 20th December, 1838, just a year after the writing of these despatches by Sir Alexander Burnes, said:—

'Her Majesty's Government accept as entirely satisfactory the declaration of the Russian Government that it does not harbour any designs hostile to the interests of Great Britain in India.'

I may leave that question there, because I can assure the noble Lord that my hon. and learned Friend has not the smallest intention—I judge so, at least, from his speech—of bringing anybody before the Committee to attack or defend the policy of the Government in the war which then unhappily took place. Nor do I suppose it is intended to arraign anybody for a policy that sacrificed at least 20,000

human lives—20,000 lives of the subjects of the Queen of England. Nor is it intended to inquire how far the loss of more than 15,000,000*l.* sterling by that policy has affected for all future time the finances and the circumstances of the Government of India. These are crimes—the whole of that policy is a crime—of a nature never to be answered for. No man can accurately measure it. No Committee of this House could adequately punish those who were the perpetrators of it. No, Sir, my hon. and learned Friend has not the slightest idea of going back twenty years for the purpose of bringing the noble Lord, or any one else who may be guilty of that great crime, to the bar of public opinion by this Committee.

But it is worth while that the House should know whether the Government in whom it placed confidence at that time, and in whom the Queen placed confidence—whether that Government was worthy of their confidence, and whether any members of the Government of that day are members of the Government at this day. It is worth while knowing whether there was and is a man in high position in the Government here or in India who had so low a sense of honour and of right that he could offer to this House mutilated, false, forged despatches and opinions of a public servant, who lost his life in the public service. Conceive any man at this moment in India engaged, as many have been during the last three years, in perilous services—conceive that any man should know that to-morrow, or next week, or any time this year, he may lay his bones in that distant land, and that six months afterwards there may be laid on the table of this House by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, or by the Secretary of State for India, letters or despatches of his from which passages have been cut out, and into which passages have been inserted, in which words have been so twisted as wholly to divert and distort his meaning, and to give to him a meaning, it may be, utterly the contrary to that

which his original despatch intended to convey. I cannot conceive any anticipation more painful or more bitter, more likely to eat into the heart of any man engaged in the service of his country in a distant land.

It is admitted, and the noble Lord has not flatly denied it—he cannot deny it—he knows it as well as the hon. and learned Member for Greenock—he knows it as well as the very man whose hand did the evil—he knows there have been garbling, mutilation, practically and essentially falsehood and forgery, in these despatches which have been laid before the House. Why was it refused to give the original despatches when they were asked for in 1842 by the hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. H. Baillie), and when they were asked for at a later period by the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Hadfield)? Why was it that the originals were so consistently withheld? That they have been given now I suppose is because those who were guilty of the outrage on the faith of Parliament thought, as twenty years had elapsed, that nobody would give himself the trouble to go into the question, and that no man would be so earnest as my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock in bringing the question before the notice of Parliament.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Hadfield) informs me that it was the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) who consented to the production of the original despatches when he was in office. I was not aware of that fact; but I am free here to tender him my thanks for the course which he took. I am sure he is the last man whom any one would suspect of being mixed up in any transaction of this kind, except with a view to give the House and the country full information with regard to it. I say, then, avoiding all the long speech of the noble Lord, that the object of the Committee is to find out who did this evil thing—who placed upon the table of the House information which was knowingly false, and despatches that were

actually forged—because if you add to or detract from, or so change a coin, or note, or deed, as to make any of them bear a meaning contrary to its original and intended meaning, of course you are guilty of such an act as I have described, and that is precisely what somebody has done in the despatches which we are now discussing. I say an odious offence has been committed against the House, and against the truth; and what we want to know is, who did it?

Now, will the noble Lord be candid enough—he does not think there is anything wrong—he says there is not much—it is very trifling—that Sir Alexander Burnes's opinions are not worth much—supposing it to be so—for the sake of argument, let me grant it; but if it is a matter of no importance, will the noble Lord be so candid as to tell us who did it? When Lord Broughton was examined before the Official Salaries Committee some years ago, he, as the noble Lord is aware, said that he took upon himself as President of the Board of Control at the time the entire responsibility of the Affghan war. The noble Lord now at the head of the Government was then a member of the India Board, and so I believe was the noble Lord the Member for the City of London. But the noble Lord at the head of the Government was also Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Now, I do not think I am wrong in supposing that this question lies between the noble Lord the Prime Minister and Lord Broughton, once a Member of this House. This thing was not done by some subordinate who cannot be found out.

My hon. and learned Friend says it has been done with marvellous care, and even with so much ability that it must have been done by a man of genius. Of course there are men of genius in very objectionable walks of life; but we know that the noble Lord at the head of the Government is a man of genius; if he had not been, he would not have sat on that bench for the last fifty years. And we know that Lord Broughton is a man of many and varied accomplish-

ments. And once more I ask the noble Lord to tell us who did it? He knows who did it. Was it his own right-hand, or was it Lord Broughton's right-hand, or was it some clever secretary in the Foreign Office or in the India Office who did this work? I say the House has a right to know. We want to know that. We want to drag the delinquent before the public. This we want to know, because we wish to deter other Ministers from committing the like offence; and we want to know it for that which most of all is necessary—to vindicate the character and honour of Parliament. Nothing can sink Parliament to a lower state of degradation and baseness than that it should permit Ministers of the Crown to lay upon the table, upon questions involving the sacrifice of 20,000,000*l.* of money and 20,000 lives, documents which are not true—which slander our public servants, and which slander them most basely when they are dead and are not here to answer. I do not believe that the Gentlemen of England in this House—upon that side of the House or upon this—will ever consent to sit down with a case proved so clearly as this is without directing the omnipotent power and eye of Parliament into the matter. I say, seeing the charge, seeing that the noble Lord was at the head of the Foreign Office at the time, that the policy of the Affghan war was always considered to be his, that the responsibility of this act must rest between him and Lord Broughton,—I should not like to hold the opinion, and I do not hold the opinion, that the noble Lord will object to a Committee to inquire into a matter in which he is himself so directly concerned.

# CANADA.

# CANADA.

## I.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 13, 1865.

*From Hansard.*

[Delivered during the debate on Colonel Jervois' Report on the Defences of Canada.]

I AM not sure that I should have addressed the House on this occasion but for the observations which have been made by the noble Lord. I think he has been perhaps a little more frank in his declarations on this occasion, and in pointing out the real thing which I suspect is passing in his mind, and in the minds of very many Members of the House who have made no statement of their own opinions during this debate. I hope the debate will be useful, although I am obliged to say, while I admit the importance of the question that has been brought before us, that I think it is one of some delicacy. That it is important is clear, because it refers to the possibility of war between this country and the United States, and its delicacy arises from this—that it is very difficult to discuss this question without saying things which tend rather in the direction of war than in the direction of peace.

The difficulty which is now before us is this—that there is an extensive colony or dependency of this country lying adjacent to the United States, and if there be a war party in the United States—a party hostile to this country—that

circumstance affords to it a very strong temptation to enter without much hesitation into a war with England, because it may feel that through Canada it can inflict a great humiliation upon this country. And at the same time it is perfectly well known to all intelligent men, especially to the statesmen and public men of the United States—it is as well known to them as it is to us—that there is no power whatever in this United Kingdom to defend successfully the territory of Canada against the power of the United States. Now we ought to know that, in order to put ourselves right upon this question, and that we may not talk folly and be called upon hereafter to act folly. The noble Lord at the head of the Government—or the Government, at any rate—is responsible for having compelled this discussion; because if a Vote is to be asked for during this Session—and it is only the beginning of other Votes—it is clearly the duty of the House to bring the subject under discussion. I think the Vote now is particularly inopportune for many reasons, but especially as we have heard from the Governor-General of Canada that they are about, in the North-American Provinces, to call into existence a new nationality; and I, for one, shall certainly object to the taxes of this country being heedlessly expended in behalf of any nationality but our own.

Now, what I should like to ask the House is this—first of all, will Canada attack the States? Clearly not. Next, will the States attack Canada—I am keeping out of view England altogether? Clearly not. There is not a man in the United States, probably, whose voice or whose opinion would have the smallest influence in that country, who would recommend or desire that an attack should be made by the United States upon Canada with a view to its forcible annexation to the Union. There have been lately, as we know, dangers on the frontier. The Canadian people have been no wiser than some Members of this House—or than a great many men amongst the richer classes in this country. And when the refugees

from the South—I am not speaking now of respectable and honourable men from the South, many of whom have left that country during these troubles, and for whom I feel the greatest commiseration, but I mean the ruffians from the South—who in large numbers have entered Canada and have employed themselves there in a course of policy likely to embroil us with the United States—I say that the people of Canada have treated these men with far too much consideration. They expressed very openly opinions hostile to the United States, whose power lay close to them.

I will not go into a detail of that which we are all sufficiently well acquainted with the seizing of American ships on the Lakes, the raid into the State of Vermont, the robbing of a bank, the killing of a man in his own shop, the stealing of horses in open day, and another transaction of which we have very strong proof, that men of this class actually conspired to set fire to the largest cities of the Union. All these things have taken place and the Canadian Government made scarcely any sign. I believe that an application was made to the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office nearly a year ago, that he should stimulate the Canadian Government to some steps to avoid the dangers that have since arisen; but with that sort of negligence which has been so much seen here, nothing was done until the American Government and people, aroused by the nature of these transactions, showed that they were no longer about to put up with them. Then the Canadian Government and people took a little notice. Now, Lord Monck, the Governor-General of Canada—about whose appointment I have heard some people complain, saying that he was a mere follower of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, who lost his election and was therefore sent out to govern a province—Lord Monck, I am bound to say, from all I have heard from Canada, has conducted himself in a manner very serviceable to the colony, and with the greatest possible propriety as

representing the Sovereign there. Lord Monck has been all along favourable to the United States, and I believe his Cabinet has also. I know that at least the most important newspaper there has always been favourable to the North. Still nothing was done; but the moment these troubles arose then everything was done. Volunteers have been sent to the frontier; the trial of the raiders has been proceeded with, and possibly they will be surrendered; and the Canadian Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed a vote in their House of Parliament to restore to the persons at St. Albans, who were robbed by the raiders, the 50,000 dollars that were taken from them.

And what is the state of things now? There is the greatest possible calm on the frontier. The United States have not a word to say against Canada. The Canadian people have found that they were in the wrong and have now returned to their right mind. There is not a man in Canada at this moment, I believe, who has any idea that the United States Government has the smallest notion of attacking them, now or at any future time, on account of anything that has transpired between the United States and Canada during these trials. But if there comes a war in which Canada shall suffer and be made a victim, it will be a war got up between the Government of Washington and the Government of London. And it becomes us to inquire whether that is at all probable. Is there anybody in this House in favour of such a war? I notice with general delight—and I was not a false prophet when I said some time ago that some day it would be so—I say I notice with delight the changed tone manifested here with regard to these American questions. Even the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Robert Cecil) can speak without anger, and without any of that ill feeling which I am sorry to say on past occasions he has manifested in discussing these questions.

Now, I believe there are no men out of Bedlam—or at least

who ought to be out of it—and I suspect there are very few men in Bedlam, who are in favour of our going to war with the United States. And in taking this view I am not arguing that it is because we see the vast naval and military power and apparently inexhaustible resources of that country. I will not assume that you or my countrymen have come to the conclusion that it is better for us not to make war with America, because you and they find her with a strength that you did not even suspect: I will say that it is upon higher grounds that we are all against a war with the United States. Our history for the last 200 years, and further back, is a record of calamitous, and for the most part, unnecessary wars. We have had enough of whatever a nation can gain by military successes and military glory. I will not turn to the disasters that might follow to our commerce nor to the wide-spread ruin that might be occasioned. I will say that we are a wiser and a better people than we were in these respects, and that we should regard a war with the United States as even a greater crime, if needlessly entered into, than war with almost any other country in the world.

Looking at our Government, we have preserved, with a good many blunders—one or two of which I shall comment upon by-and-by—neutrality during this great struggle. We have had it stated in this House, and we have had a Motion in this House, that the blockade was ineffective and ought to be broken. Men of various classes, some of them agents of the Richmond conspiracy—persons, it is said, of influence from France—all these are reported to have brought their influence to bear on the noble Lord at the head of the Government and his colleagues, with a view of inducing them to take part in this quarrel, and all this has failed to break our neutrality. Therefore, I should say, we may clearly come to the conclusion that England is not in favour of war; and if there should be any act of war, or any aggression whatever, out of which Canada will suffer, I believe honestly that it

will not come from this country. That is a matter which gives me great satisfaction, and I believe the House will agree with me that I am not misstating the case.

Now let us ask, Is the United States for war? I know the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Robert Cecil) has a lurking idea that there is some danger from that quarter; I am not at all certain that it does not prevail in other minds, and in many minds not so acute as that with which the noble Lord is gifted. If we had at the Bar of the House, Lord Russell as representing the English Government, and Mr. Adams as the representative of the Government of President Lincoln, and if we were to ask their opinion, they would tell us that which the Secretary for the Colonies has this night told us—that the relations between the two countries, so far as it is possible to discover them, are perfectly amicable; and I know from the communications between the Minister of the United States and our Minister for Foreign Affairs that they have been growing more and more amicable for many months past. Now, I take the liberty of expressing this opinion that there has never been an administration in the United States since the time of the Revolutionary War, up to this hour, more entirely favourable to peace with all foreign countries, and more especially favourable to peace with England, than the Government of which President Lincoln is the head. I will undertake to say that the most exact investigator of what has taken place will not be able to point to a single word he—President Lincoln—has said, or a single line he has written, or a single act he has done, since his first accession to power, that betrays anger against this country, or any of that vindictive feeling which some persons here may imagine to inflame the breasts of the President and his Cabinet.

Then if Canada is not for war, if England is not for war, and if the United States are not for war, whence is the war to come? That is what I should like to ask. I wish the

noble Lord the Member for Stamford had been a little more frank. I should like to ask whence comes the anxiety, which undoubtedly to some extent prevails? It may be assumed even that the Government is not wholly free from it; for they have shown it in an almost ludicrous manner by proposing a vote of 50,000*l*. It is said the newspapers have got into a sort of panic. They can do that any night between the hours of six and twelve o'clock, when they write their articles. They are either very courageous or very panic-stricken.

It is said that 'the City' joins in this feeling. We know what 'the City' means—the right hon. Gentleman alluded to it to-night. It means that the people who deal in shares—though that does not describe the whole of them—'the moneyed interest' of the City, are alarmed. Well, I never knew the City to be right. Men who are deep in great monetary transactions, and who are steeped to the lips sometimes in perilous speculations, are not able to take broad and dispassionate views of political questions of this nature.

As to the newspapers, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) when, referring to one of them in particular, he intimated that he thought its course was indicated by a wish to cover its own confusion. Surely, after four years' uninterrupted publication of lies with regard to America, I should think it has done pretty much to destroy its influence on foreign questions for ever.

But there is a much higher authority—that is the authority of the Peers. I do not know why we should be so much restricted with regard to the House of Lords in this House. I think I have observed that in their place they are not so squeamish as to what they say about us. It appeared to me that in this debate the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) felt it necessary to get up and endeavour to defend his chief. Now, if I were to give advice to the hon. Gentlemen opposite, it would be this—for while stating that during the last four

years many noble Lords in the other House have said foolish things, I think I should be uncandid if I did not say that you also have said foolish things—learn from the example set you by the right hon. Gentleman. He, with a thoughtfulness and statesmanship which you do not all acknowledge, he did not say a word from that bench likely to create difficulty with the United States. I think his chief and his followers might learn something from his example.

But I have discovered one reason why in that other place mistakes of this nature are so often made. Not long ago there was a great panic raised, very much by what was said in another place about France. Now an attempt is made there to create a panic upon this question. In the hall of the Reform Club there is affixed to the wall a paper which gives a telegraphic account of what is being done in this House every night, and what is also being done in the other House, and I find almost every night from the beginning of the Session that the only words that have appeared on the side which is devoted to a record of the proceedings of the House of Lords are these, 'Lords adjourned.' The noble Lord at the head of the Government is responsible for much of this. He has brought this House into nearly the same condition. We do very little, and they do absolutely nothing. All of us in our younger days, I am quite sure, were taught by those who had the care of us a verse which was intended to inculcate the virtue of industry. One couplet was to this effect—

'Satan still some mischief finds
For idle hands to do.'

And I do not believe that men, however high in station, are exempt from that unfortunate effect which arises to all of us from a course of continued idleness. But I should like to ask this House in a most serious mood, what is the reason that any man in this country has now more anxiety with regard to the preservation of peace with the United States than he had a few years ago? Is there not a consciousness

in our heart of hearts that we have not during the last five years behaved generously to our neighbours? Do not we feel in some sort a pricking of conscience, and are we not sensible that conscience tends to make us cowards at this particular juncture?

I shall not review the past transactions with anger, but with feelings of sorrow; for I maintain, and I think history will bear out what I say, that there is no generous and high-minded Englishman who can look back upon the transactions of the last four years without a feeling of sorrow at the course we have pursued on some important occasions. As I am wishful to speak with a view to a better state of feeling, both in this country and in the United States, I shall take the liberty, if the House will permit me for a few minutes, to refer to two or three of these transactions, where, I think, though perhaps we were not in the main greatly wrong, yet in some circumstances we were so far unfortunate as to have created an irritation which at this moment we wish did not exist. The hon. Member for Horsham (Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald) referred to the course taken by the Government with regard to the acknowledgment of the belligerent rights of the South. Now I have never been one to condemn the Government for acknowledging those belligerent rights, except upon this ground—I think it might be logically contended that it might possibly have become necessary to take that step—but I do think the time and manner in which it was done were most unfortunate, and could not but produce very evil effects.

Going back nearly four years, we recollect what occurred when the news arrived of the first shot having been fired at Fort Sumter. That, I think, was about the 12th of April. Immediately after that time it was announced that a new Minister was coming to this country. Mr. Dallas had intimated to the Government that as he did not represent the new President he would rather not undertake anything of

importance; but that his successor was on his way and would arrive on such a day. When a man leaves New York on a given day you can calculate to about twelve hours when he will be in London. Mr. Adams, I think, arrived in London about the 13th of May, and when he opened his newspaper next morning he found the Proclamation of neutrality, acknowledging the belligerent rights of the South. I say that the proper course to have taken would have been to have waited till Mr. Adams arrived here, and to have discussed the matter with him in a friendly manner, explaining the ground upon which the English Government had felt themselves bound to issue that Proclamation, and representing that it was not done in any manner as an unfriendly act towards the United States Government. But no precaution whatever was taken; it was done with unfriendly haste; and it had this effect, that it gave comfort and courage to the conspiracy at Montgomery and at Richmond, and caused great grief and irritation amongst that portion of the people of America who were most strongly desirous of maintaining friendly relations between their country and England.

To illustrate this point allow me to suppose a great revolt had taken place in Ireland, and that we had sent over within a fortnight of the occurrence of such an unfortunate event a new Minister to Washington, and that on the morning after arriving there he had found, that without consulting him, the Government had taken a hasty step by which the belligerent rights of the insurgents had been acknowledged, and by which comfort and support had been given them. I ask any man whether, under such circumstances, the feeling throughout the whole of Great Britain, and in the mind of every man anxious to preserve the unity of Great Britain and Ireland, would not necessarily be one of irritation and exasperation against the United States?

I will not argue this matter further – to do so would be simply to deprecate the intellect of the hon. Gentlemen listening to

me. Seven or eight months afterwards there happened another transaction of a very different but unfortunate nature—that is the transaction arising out of the seizure of two Southern envoys on board an English ship—the *Trent*. I recollect making a speech down at Rochdale about the time of that occurrence. It was a speech entirely in favour of the United States Government and people—but I did not then undertake, as I do not undertake now, in the slightest degree to defend the seizure of those two envoys. I said that although precedents for such an action might possibly be found to have occurred in what I will call some of the evil days in our history, at any rate it was opposed to the maxims and principles of the United States Government, and was, as I thought, a bad act—an act which should not have been done. Well, I do not complain of the demand that those men should be given up; but I do complain of the manner in which that demand was made, and the menaces by which it was accompanied. I think it was wrong and unstatesman-like that at the moment we heard of the seizure, when there was not the least foundation for supposing that the United States Government were aware of the act, or had in the slightest degree sanctioned it, as we since well know they did not, that we should immediately get ships ready, and send off troops, and incite the organs of the press—who are always too ready to inflame the passions of the people to frenzy—to prepare their minds for war.

But that was not all; because before the United States had heard a word of the matter from this country their Secretary of State had written to Mr. Adams a despatch, which was communicated to our Government, and in which it was stated that the transaction had not been done by any orders of theirs, and that therefore, as far as they and we were concerned, it was a pure accident, which they should consider with the most friendly disposition towards this country. How came it that this despatch was never published for the information of the people of this country? How happened it

that during one whole month the flame of war was fanned by the newspapers, particularly by those supposed to be devoted to the Government, and that one of those newspapers, supposed to be peculiarly devoted to the Prime Minister, had the audacity—I do not know whence it obtained its instructions—to deny that any such despatch had been received? Now, Sir, I am of opinion that it is not possible to maintain amicable relations with any great country—I think it is not possible to do so with any little one—unless Governments will manage these transactions in what I will call a more courteous and more honourable manner. I happen to know—for I received a letter from the United States, from one of the most eminent men in that country, dated only two days before those men were given up, in which the writer said—that the real difficulty in the course of the President was that the menaces of the English Government had made it almost impossible for them to concede; and that the question they asked themselves was whether the English Government was intending to seek a cause of quarrel or not. And I am sure the noble Lord at the head of the Government, if such a demand had been made upon him with courtesy and fairness, as should be between friendly nations, would have been more disposed to concede, and would have found it much more easy to concede, than if the demand had been accompanied by menaces such as his Government offered to the Government of the United States. Now the House will observe that I am not condemning the Government of this country on the main point of what they did. I am only condemning them because they did not do what they had to do in that manner which would be most likely to remove difficulties and preserve a friendly feeling between the two nations.

Then I come to the last thing I shall mention—to the question of the ships which have been preying upon the commerce of the United States. I shall confine myself to that one vessel, the *Alabama*. She was built in this country; all her

munitions of war were from this country; almost every man on board her was a subject of Her Majesty. She sailed from one of our chief ports. She is known to have been built by a firm in which a Member of this House was, and I presume is, interested. Now, Sir, I do not complain—I know that once, when I referred to this question two years ago, when my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford brought it forward in this House, the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Laird) was excessively angry—I do not complain that the Member for Birkenhead has struck up a friendship with Captain Semmes, who may probably be described, as another sailor once was of similar pursuits, as being 'the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship.' Therefore, I do not complain of a man who has an acquaintance with that notorious person, and I do not complain, and did not then, that the Member for Birkenhead looks admiringly upon the greatest example which men have ever seen of the greatest crime which men have ever committed. I do not complain even that he should applaud that which is founded upon a gigantic traffic in living flesh and blood—a traffic into which no subject of this realm can enter without being deemed a felon in the eyes of our law and punished as such. But what I do complain of is this, that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birkenhead, a magistrate of a county, a deputy-lieutenant—whatever that may be—a representative of a constituency, and having a seat in this ancient and honourable Assembly—that he should, as I believe he did, if concerned in the building of this ship, break the law of his country, by driving us into an infraction of International Law, and treating with undeserved disrespect the Proclamation of neutrality of the Queen.

I have another complaint to make, and in allusion to that hon. Member. It is within your recollection that when on a former occasion he made that speech and defended his course, he declared that he would rather be the builder of a dozen *Alabamas* than do something which nobody has done.

That language was received with repeated cheering from the Opposition side of the House. Well, Sir, I undertake to say that that was at least a most unfortunate circumstance, and I beg to tell the hon. Gentleman that at the end of last Session, when the great debate took place on the question of Denmark, there were many men on this side of the House who had no objection whatever to see the present Government turned out of office, for they had many grounds of complaint against them, but they felt it impossible that they should take the responsibility of bringing into office the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire or the party who could utter such cheers on such a subject as that.

Turning from the Member for Birkenhead to the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office, he, who in the case of the acknowledgment of belligerent rights had proceeded with such remarkable celerity, such undue and unfriendly haste, amply compensated for it when he came to the question of the *Alabama*, by his slowness of procedure. And this is a strange circumstance, which even the noble Lord's Colleagues have never been able to explain, that although he sent orders to Cork to stop the *Alabama* if she arrived there, he allowed her afterwards, when she had gone out of the jurisdiction of the Crown in these islands, to go into a dozen or a score of ports belonging to this country in different parts of the world. It seems to me that this is rather a special instance of that feebleness of purpose and of action on the part of the noble Lord which I regret to say has on many occasions done much to mar what would otherwise be a great political career. I will not detain the House on the question of the rams. The hon. Member for Birkenhead, or the firm or the family, or whoever the people are at Birkenhead who do these things, this firm at Birkenhead, after they had seen the peril into which the country was drifting on account of the *Alabama*, proceeded most audaciously to build those two rams; and it was only at the very last moment, when on the eve of a war

with the United States on account of those rams, that the Government happily had the courage to seize them, and thus the last danger was averted.

I suppose there are some shipowners here. I know there are many in London—there are many in Liverpool—what would be the feeling in this country if they suffered in this way from ships built in the United States? There is a shipowner in New York, Mr. Lowe, a member of the Chamber of Commerce of New York. He had three large ships destroyed by the *Alabama*; and the *George Griswold*, which came to this country freighted with a heavy cargo of provisions of various kinds for the suffering people of Lancashire, was destroyed on her return passage, and the ship that destroyed it may have been, and I believe was, built by these patriotic shipbuilders of Birkenhead. These are things that must rankle in the breast of a country which is subjected to such losses and indignities. Even to-day I see in the newspapers that a vessel that went out from this country has destroyed ten or eleven ships between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia. I have thought it unnecessary to bring continually American questions before the House, as some Gentlemen have done during the last two or three Sessions. They should have asked a few questions in regard to these ships; but no, they asked no question upon these points. They asked questions upon every point on which they thought they might embarrass the Government and make the great difficulties of the Government greater in all their transactions with the United States.

But the Members of the Government have not been wise. I hope it will not be thought that I am unnecessarily critical if I say that Governments are not generally very wise. Two years ago the noble Lord at the head of the Government and the Attorney-General addressed the House. I asked the noble Lord—I do not often ask him for anything—to speak, if only for five minutes, words of generosity and

sympathy to the Government and people of the United States. He did not do it. Perhaps I was foolish to expect it. The Attorney-General made a most able speech. It was the only time that I have listened to him, ever since I have known him in this House, with pain, for I thought his speech was full of bad morals and bad law. I am quite certain that he even gave an account of the facts of the case which was not as ingenuous and fair as the House had a right to expect from him. Next Session the noble Lord and the Attorney-General turned quite round. They had a different story about the same transaction, and gradually, as the aspect of things was changed on the other side of the Atlantic, there has been a gradual return to good sense and fairness, not only on the part of Members upon the Treasury Bench, but on that of other Members of the House.

Now, Sir, I would not willingly say a word that would wound either the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I do not know amongst the official statesmen of this country two men for whom I have greater sympathy or more respect; but I have to complain of them. I do not know why it is that they both go down to Newcastle—a town in which I feel a great interest—and there give forth words of offence and unwisdom. I know that what the noble Lord said was all very smart, but really it was not true, and I have not much respect for a thing that is merely smart and is not true. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a statement too. The papers made it appear that he did it with exultation; but that is a mistake. But he made a statement, and though I do not know what will be in his Budget, I know his wishes in regard to that statement—namely, that he had never made it.

Those Gentlemen, bear in mind, sit, as it were, on a hill; they are not obscure men, making speeches in a public-house or even at a respectable mechanics' institution; they are men

whose voice is heard wherever the English language is known. And knowing that, and knowing what effect their speeches will have, especially in Lancashire, where men are in trade, and where profits and losses are affected by the words of statesmen, they use the language of which I complain; and beyond this, for I can conceive some idea of the irritation those statements must have caused in the United States. I might refer to the indiscriminating abuse of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Sheffield; and I may add to that the unsleeping ill-will of the noble Lord the Member for Stamford. I am not sure that these two Members of the House are in the least degree converted yet. I think I heard the hon. Member for Sheffield utter to-night some ejaculation that looked as if he retained all his old sentiments. [Mr. Roebuck: 'Exactly.'] I am sorry it is so. I did expect that these things would be regretted and repented of; and I must express my hope that if any one of you who have been thus ungenerous shall ever fall into trouble of any kind that you will find your friends more kind and more just than you have been to your fellow-countrymen —for I will still call them so—at the other side of the Atlantic. And as to the press, Sir, I think it is unnecessary to say much about that, because every night those unfortunate writers are now endeavouring to back out of everything they have been saying; and I can only hope that their power for evil in future will be greatly lessened by the stupendous exhibition of ignorance and folly which they have made to the world.

Now, Sir, having made this statement, I suppose the noble Lord the Member for Stamford, if he were to get up after me, would say: 'Well, if all this be true—if we have done all these injurious things, if we have created all this irritation in the United States—will it not be likely that this irritation will provoke a desire for vengeance, and that the chances of war are greatly increased by it?' I do not know whether

the chances of war are increased, but I will say that not only is war not certain, but it is to the last degree improbable.

But, Sir, there is another side to this question. All England is not included in the rather general condemnation which I have thought it my duty to express. There is another side. Looking to our own population, what have the millions been saying and doing—the millions you are so much afraid of?—especially the noble Lord the Member for Stamford, who objects to the transference of power to those millions from those who now hold it, and, from his position, naturally objects. I beg leave to tell the House that, taking the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire—your great counties of population—the millions of men there, whose industry has not only created but sustains the fabric of your national power, have had no kind of sympathy with the views which I have been condemning. They have been more generous and more wise; they have shown that magnanimity and love of freedom are not extinct. And, speaking of the county from which I come—the county of many sorrows, whose griefs have hung like a dark cloud over almost every heart during the last three years—all the attempts which the agents of the Confederacy have made there by money, by printing, by platform speeches, by agitation, have utterly failed to get from that population one expression of sympathy with the American insurrection. And, Sir, if the bond of union and friendship between England and America shall remain unbroken, we shall not have to thank the wealthy and the cultivated, but those laborious millions whom statesmen and histories too frequently take little account of. They know a little of the United States, which Gentlemen opposite and some on this side the House do not appear to know. They know that every man of them would be better off on the American continent, if he chose to go there, and would be welcome to every right and privilege that the people there are in possession of. They know further that every man may have from the United States Govern-

ment a free gift of 160 acres of the most fertile land in the world. [A laugh.] I do not understand that laugh, but the gift, under the Homestead Act of America, of 160 acres of land is a great deal for a man who has no land. I can tell you that the Homestead Act and the liberality of the American Government have had a great effect upon the population of the North of England, and I can tell you further—that the labouring population of this country—the artisans and the mechanics—will never join heartily in any policy which is intended to estrange the people of the United States from the people of the United Kingdom.

But, Sir, we have other securities for peace which are not less than these, and I find them in the character of the Government and people of the American Union. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) referred to what must reasonably be supposed to happen in case this rebellion should be put down—that when a nation is exhausted it will not rush rashly into a new struggle. The loss of life has been great, the loss of treasure enormous. Happily for them, this life and this treasure have not been sacrificed to keep a Bourbon on the throne of France, or to keep the Turks in Europe; the sacrifice was for an object which every man could comprehend, which every man could examine by the light of his own intelligence and his own conscience; for if these men have given their lives and their possessions, it was for the attainment of a great end, the maintenance of the unity and integrity of a great country. History in future time must be written in a different spirit from all history in the past, if it should express any condemnation of that people. Mr. Lincoln, who is now for the second time President of the United States, was elected exclusively by what was termed the Republican party. He is now elected by what may be called the Great Union party of the nation. But Mr. Lincoln's party has always been for peace. That party in the North has never

carried on any war of aggression, and has never desired one. I speak of the North only, the Free States. And let the House remember that in that country landed property, property of all kind, is more universally distributed than in any other nation, that instruction and school education are also more widely diffused there than amongst any other people. I say, they have never carried on hitherto a war for aggrandizement or for vengeance, and I believe they will not begin one now.

Canada, I think the noble Lord will admit, is a very tempting bait, not indeed for the purpose of annexation, but for the purpose of humiliating this country. I agree with hon. Gentlemen who have said that it would be discreditable to England, in the light of her past history, that she should leave any portion of her Empire which she could defend, undefended. But still it is admitted —and I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) produced a great effect upon those who heard it—the House admitted that in case of war with the United States, Canada could not be defended by any power on land or at sea which this country could raise or spare for that purpose. I am very sorry, not that we cannot defend Canada, but that any portion of the dominions of the British Crown is in such circumstances as to tempt evil-disposed people to attack it with the view of humiliating us, because I believe that transactions which humiliate a Government and a nation are not only disagreeable, but a great national harm.

But, now, is there a war party in the United States? I believe there is such a party. It is that party which was a war party eighty years ago. It is the party represented by hon. Gentlemen who sit on that bench—the Irish party. They who are hostile to this country in the United States are those who were recently malcontent subjects of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth. It is these, and such

as these, to whom the noble Lord at the head of the Government offers only such consolation as that of telling them that 'the rights of the tenants are the wrongs of the landlords,' who constitute the only war party in the United States; and it was the war party there in the days of Lord North. But the real power of the United States does not rest on that class. American mobs—and, excepting some portion of the population of New York, I would not apply the language even to them—for the sake of forcing their Congress and their Executive to a particular course, are altogether unknown. The real mob in your sense, is that party of chivalrous gentlemen in the South, who have received, I am sorry to say, so much sympathy from some persons in this country and in this House. But the real power depends upon another class—the landowners throughout the country, and there are millions of them. In this last election for President of the United States, I was told by a citizen of New York, who was most active in the election, that in the State of New York alone 100,000 Irish votes were given, as he expressed it, solidly—that is, in one mass—for General M'Clellan, and that not more than 2,000 were given for President Lincoln. You see the preponderance of that party in the city of New York, and that is the feeling amongst them throughout the State of New York; but, throughout the whole of the United States, it is merely a small per-centage, which has no sensible effect upon the constitution of Congress, or upon legislation or government.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) referred to a point which I suppose has really been the cause of this debate, and that is the temper of the United States in making certain demands upon our Government. I asked a question the other night after the noble Lord had asked a question upon the subject—I asked whether we had not claims against them. I understand that claims were made upon us by the United States amounting to 300,000*l.* or 400,000*l.* I am afraid that we have claims against them,

amounting probably to as much as that. If any man thinks he has a right to go to law with another, and that other has an answer to his claim, the case must be heard. And so between two great nations and two free Governments. If one has claims against the other, and the other has counter claims, clearly nothing can be more fair than that those claims should be courteously and honestly considered. It is quite absurd to suppose that the English Government and the Government at Washington can have a question about half a million of money which they cannot amicably settle. The noble Lord, I believe, thinks it is not a question for arbitration, but that it is a question of principle. Well, all questions of property almost are questions of law, and you go to a lawyer and settle them if you can. In this case it would be surely as easy to have the matter settled by some impartial person as it was to ask the Senate or other authority at Hamburg to settle a question between this country and the Empire of Brazil. Our most perfect security is, that as the war in America draws to a close – if it should happily soon draw to a close—we shall become more generous to them, and their Government and people will probably become less irritated towards us. And when the passions have cooled down, I am quite sure that Mr. Seward on that side and Earl Russell on this, Mr. Adams here and Sir Frederick Bruce there, will be able, without much difficulty, to settle this, which is, after all, an unimportant matter, as a question of accounts between the two nations.

I have only one more observation to make, and it is this—I suspect the root of all the unfortunate circumstances that have occurred is the feeling of jealousy which we have cherished with regard to the American nation. It was very much shown at the beginning of this war, when a Member whom I will not name, for I am sure his wish is that his name should not be mentioned in connection with it now, spoke of the bursting of the bubble republic. I recollect that

Lord John Russell, as he then was speaking from that bench, turned round and rebuked him in language which was worthy of his name, and character, and position. I beg to tell that Gentleman, and anybody else who talks about a bubble republic, that I have a strong suspicion he will see that a great many bubbles will burst before that. Why should we fear a great nation on the American continent? Some people fear that, should America become a great nation, she will be arrogant and aggressive. It does not follow that it should be so. The character of a nation does not depend altogether upon its size, but upon the instruction, the civilization, and the morals of its people. You fancy the supremacy of the sea will pass away from you; and the noble Lord, who has had much experience, and is supposed to be wiser on the subject than any other man in the House, will say that 'Rule Britannia' may become obsolete. Well, inasmuch as the supremacy of the seas means arrogance and the assumption of a dictatorial power on the part of this country, the sooner that becomes obsolete the better. I do not believe that it is for the advantage of this country, or of any country in the world, that any one nation should pride itself upon what is termed the supremacy of the sea; and I hope the time is coming—I believe the hour is hastening—when we shall find that law and justice will guide the councils and will direct the policy of the Christian nations of the world. Nature will not be baffled because we are jealous of the United States—the decrees of Providence will not be overthrown by aught we can do.

The population of the United States is now not less than 35,000,000. When the next Parliament of England has lived to the age which this has lived to, that population will be 40,000,000, and you may calculate the increase at the rate of rather more than 1,000,000 of persons per year. Who is to gainsay it? Will constant snarling at a great republic alter this state of things, or swell us up in these islands to

40,000,000 or 50,000,000, or bring them down to our 30,000,000? Hon. Members and the country at large should consider these facts, and learn from them that it is the interest of the nations to be at one—and for us to be in perfect courtesy and amity with the great English nation on the other side of the Atlantic. I am sure that the longer that nation exists the less will our people be disposed to sustain you in any needless hostility against them or jealousy of them. And I am the more convinced of this from what I have seen of the conduct of the people in the north of England during the last four years. I believe, on the other hand, that the American people, when this excitement is over, will be willing, so far as aggressive acts against us are concerned, to bury in oblivion transactions which have given them much pain, and that they will make the allowance which they may fairly make, that the people of this country—even those high in rank and distinguished in culture—have had a very inadequate knowledge of the real state of the events which have taken place in that country since the beginning of the war.

It is on record that when the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was about to begin his great work, David Hume wrote a letter to him urging him not to employ the French but the English tongue, 'because,' he said, 'our establishments in America promise superior stability and duration to the English language.' How far that promise has been in part fulfilled we who are living now can see; but how far it will be more largely and more completely fulfilled in after times we must leave after times to tell. I believe that in the centuries which are to come it will be the greatest pride and the highest renown of England that from her loins have sprung a hundred millions—it may be two hundred millions—of men who dwell and prosper on that continent which the grand old Genoese gave to Europe. Sir, if the sentiments which I have uttered shall become the

sentiments of the Parliament and people of the United Kingdom—if the moderation which I have described shall mark the course of the Government and of the people of the United States—then, notwithstanding some present irritation and some present distrust—and I have faith both in us and in them—I believe that these two great commonwealths will march abreast, the parents and the guardians of freedom and justice, wheresoever their language shall be spoken and their power shall extend.

# CANADA.

## II.

### THE CANADIAN FORTIFICATIONS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 23, 1865.

I SHALL ask the attention of the House for only a few moments. If the hon. Member (Mr. Bentinck) divides, I shall go into the same lobby with him. I am afraid that, in making that announcement, I shall excite some little alarm in the mind of the hon. Gentleman. I wish therefore to say, that I shall not in going into the lobby agree with him in many of the statements he has made. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) said, that he approached the military question with great diffidence, and I was very glad to see any signs of diffidence in that quarter. After that explanation, he asked the House with a triumphant air whether there is any difficulty in defending a frontier of one thousand or fifteen hundred miles, and whether the practicability of doing so is a new doctrine in warfare. But one thousand or fifteen hundred miles of frontier to defend at the centre of your power, is one thing; but at three thousand or four thousand miles from the centre, it is an entirely different thing. I venture to say, that there is not a man in this House, or a sensible man out of it, who, apart from the

consideration of this vote, or some special circumstances attending it, believes that the people of this country could attempt a successful defence of the frontier of Canada against the whole power of the United States. I said the other night, that I hoped we should not now talk folly, and hereafter, in the endeavour to be consistent, act folly. We all know perfectly well that we are talking folly when we say that the Government of this country would send either ships or men to make an effectual defence of Canada against the power of the United States, supposing war to break out. Understand, I am not in the least a believer in the probability of war, but I will discuss the question for one moment as if war were possible. I suppose some men in this House think it probable. But if it be possible or probable, and if you have to look this difficulty in the face, there is no extrication from it but in the neutrality or independence of Canada.

I agree with those Members who say that it is the duty of a great empire to defend every portion of it. I admit that as a general proposition, though hon. Gentlemen opposite, and some on this side, do not apply that rule to the United States. But, admitting that rule, and supposing that we are at all points unprepared for such a catastrophe, may we not, as reasonable men, look ahead, and try if it be not possible to escape from it? [An hon. Member: 'Run away?'] No, not by running away, though there are many circumstances in which brave men run away; and you may get into difficulty on this Canadian question, which may make you look back and wish that you had run away a good time ago. I object to this vote on a ground which, I believe, has not been raised by any Member in the present discussion. I am not going to say that the expenditure of fifty thousand pounds is a matter of great consequence to this country, that the expenditure of this money in the proposed way will be taken as a menace by the United States. I do not think that this can be fairly said; for whether building fortifications at

Quebec be useless or not, such a proceeding is not likely to enable the Canadians to overrun the State of New York. The United States, I think, will have no right to complain of this expenditure. The utmost it can do will be to show them that some persons, and perhaps the Government of this country, have some little distrust of them, and so far it may do injury. I complain of the expenditure and the policy announced by the Colonial Secretary, on a ground which I thought ought to have been urged by the noble Lord the Member for Wick, who is a sort of half-Canadian. He made a speech which I listened to with great pleasure, and told the House what some of us, perhaps, did not know before; but if I had been connected, as he is, with Canada, I would have addressed the House from a Canadian point of view.

What is it that the Member for Oxford says? He states, in reference to the expenditure for the proposed fortifications, that, though a portion of the expenditure is to be borne by us, the main portion is to be borne by Canada; but I venture to tell him, that, if there shall be any occasion to defend Canada at all, it will not arise from anything Canada does, but from what England does; and therefore I protest against the doctrine that the Cabinet in London may get into difficulties, and ultimately into war, with the Cabinet at Washington; that because Canada lies adjacent to the United States, and may consequently become a great battle-field, this United Kingdom has a right to call on Canada for the main portion of that expenditure. Who has asked you to spend fifty thousand pounds, and the hundreds of thousands which may be supposed to follow, but which perhaps Parliament may be indisposed hereafter to grant? What is the proportion which Canada is to bear? If we are to spend two hundred thousand pounds at Quebec, is Canada to spend four hundred thousand pounds at Montreal? If Canada is to spend double whatever we may spend, is it not obvious that every Canadian will ask himself—what

is the advantage of the connection between Canada and England?

Every Canadian knows perfectly well, and nobody better than the noble Lord the Member for Wick, that there is no more prospect of a war between Canada and the United States alone, than between the Empire of France and the Isle of Man. If that is so, why should the Canadians be taxed beyond all reason, as the Colonial Secretary proposes to tax them, for a policy not Canadian, and for a calamity which, if ever it occurs, must occur from some transactions between England and the United States? There are Gentlemen here who know a good deal of Canada, and I see behind me one who knows perfectly well what is the condition of the Canadian finances. We complain that Canada levies higher duties on British manufactures than the United States did before the present war, and much higher than France does. But when we complain to Canada of this, and say it is very unpleasant usage from a part of our empire, the Canadians reply that their expenditure is so much, and their debt, with the interest on it, so much, that they are obliged to levy these heavy duties. If the Canadian finances are in the unfortunate position described; if the credit of Canada is not very good in the market of this country; if you see what are the difficulties of the Canadians during a period of peace; consider what will be their difficulties if the doctrine of the Colonial Secretary be carried out, which is that whatever expenditure is necessary for the defence of Canada, though we bear a portion, the main part must be borne by Canada.

We must then come to this inevitable conclusion. Every Canadian will say, 'We are close alongside of a great nation; our parent state is three thousand miles away; there are litigious, and there may be even warlike, people in both nations, and they may occasion the calamity of a great war; we are peaceable people, having no foreign politics, happily; we may be involved in war, and while the cities of Great

Britain are not touched by a single shell, nor one of its fields ravaged, there is not a city or a village in this Canada in which we live which will not be liable to the ravages of war on the part of our powerful neighbour.' Therefore the Canadians will say, unless they are unlike all other Englishmen (who appear to have more sense the farther they go from their own country), that it would be better for Canada to be disentangled from the politics of England, and to assume the position of an independent state.

I suspect from what has been stated by official Gentlemen in the present Government and in previous Governments, that there is no objection to the independence of Canada whenever Canada may wish it. I have been glad to hear those statements, because I think they mark an extraordinary progress in sound opinions in this country. I recollect the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office on one occasion being very angry with me, he said I wished to make a great empire less; but a great empire, territorially, may be lessened without its power and authority in the world being diminished. I believe if Canada now, by a friendly separation from this country, became an independent state, choosing its own form of government—monarchical, if it liked a monarchy, or republican, if it preferred a republic—it would not be less friendly to England, and its tariff would not be more adverse to our manufactures than it is now. In the case of a war with America, Canada would then be a neutral country; and the population would be in a state of greater security. Not that I think there is any fear of war, but the Government admit that it may occur by their attempt to obtain money for these fortifications. I object, therefore, to this vote, not on that account, nor even because it causes some distrust, or may cause it, in the United States; but I object to it mainly because I think we are commencing a policy which we shall either have to abandon, because Canada will not submit to it, or else which will bring

upon Canada a burden in the shape of fortification expenditure that will make her more and more dissatisfied with this country, and that will lead rapidly to her separation from us. I do not object to that separation in the least; I believe it would be better for us and better for her. But I think that, of all the misfortunes which could happen between us and Canada, this would be the greatest, that her separation should take place after a period of irritation and estrangement, and that we should have on that continent to meet another element in some degree hostile to this country.

I am sorry, Sir, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government, and his colleagues, have taken this course; but it appears to me to be wonderfully like almost everything which the Government does. It is a Government apparently of two parts, the one part pulling one way and the other part pulling another, and the result generally is something which does not please anybody, or produce any good effect in any direction. They now propose a scheme which has just enough in it to create distrust and irritation, enough to make it in some degree injurious, and they do not do enough to accomplish any of the objects for which, according to their statements, the proposition is made. Somebody asked the other night whether the Administration was to rule, or the House of Commons. Well, I suspect from the course of the debates, that on this occasion the Administration will be allowed to rule. We are accustomed to say that the Government suggests a thing on its own responsibility, and therefore we will allow them to do it. But the fact is, that the Government knows no more of this matter than any other dozen gentlemen in this House. They are not a bit more competent to form an opinion upon it. They throw it down on the table, and ask us to discuss and vote it.

I should be happy to find the House, disregarding all the intimations that war is likely, anxious not to urge Canada into incurring an expenditure which she will not bear, and

which, if she will not bear, must end in one of two things—either in throwing the whole burden upon us, or in breaking up, perhaps suddenly and in anger, the connection between us and that colony, and in making our future relations with her most unsatisfactory. I do not place much reliance on the speech of the right honourable Member for Buckinghamshire, not because he cannot judge of the question just as well as I or any one of us can do, but because I notice that in matters of this kind Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) bench, whatever may have been their animosities towards the Gentlemen on this (the Treasury) bench on other questions, shake hands. They may tell you that they have no connection with the House over the way, but the fact is, their connection is most intimate. And if the right honourable Member for Buckinghamshire were now sitting on the Treasury bench, and the noble Viscount were sitting opposite to him, the noble Viscount, I have no doubt, would give him the very same support that he now receives from the right hon. Gentleman.

This seems to me a question so plain, so much on the surface, appealing so much to our common sense, having in it such great issues for the future, that I am persuaded it is the duty of the House of Commons on this occasion to take the matter out of the hands of the executive Government, and to determine that, with regard to the future policy of Canada, we will not ourselves expend the money of the English tax-payers, and not force upon the tax-payers of Canada a burden which, I am satisfied, they will not long continue to bear.

# CANADA.

## III.

### THE CANADIAN CONFEDERATION SCHEME.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 28, 1867.

ALTHOUGH this measure has not excited much interest in the House or in the country, yet it appears to me to be of such very great importance that it should be treated rather differently, or that the House should be treated rather differently in respect to it. I have never before known of any great measure affecting any large portion of the empire or its population which has been brought in and attempted to be hurried through Parliament in the manner in which this bill is being dealt with. But the importance of it is much greater to the inhabitants of those provinces than it is to us. It is on that account alone that it might be expected we should examine it closely, and see that we commit no error in passing it.

The right hon. Gentleman has not offered us, on one point, an explanation which I think he will be bound to make. This bill does not include the whole of the British North American Provinces. I presume the two left out have been left out because it is quite clear they did not wish to come in. [Mr. Adderley: 'I am glad I can inform the hon.

Gentleman that they are, one of them at least, on the point of coming in.'] Yes; the reason of their being left out is because they were not willing to come in. They may hereafter become willing, and if so the bill will admit them by a provision which appears reasonable. But the province of Nova Scotia is also unwilling to come in, and it is assumed that because some time ago the Legislature of that province voted a resolution partly in favour of some such course, therefore the population is in favour of it.

For my part, I do not believe in the propriety or wisdom of the Legislature voting on a great question of this nature with reference to the Legislature of Nova Scotia, if the people of Nova Scotia have never had the question directly put to them. I have heard there is at present in London a petition complaining of the hasty proceeding of Parliament, and asking for delay, signed by 31,000 adult males of the province of Nova Scotia, and that that petition is in reality signed by at least half of all the male inhabitants of that province. So far as I know, the petition does not protest absolutely against union, but against the manner in which it is being carried out by this scheme and bill, and the hasty measures of the Colonial Office. Now, whether the scheme be a good or bad one, scarcely anything can be more foolish, looking to the future, than that any of the provinces should be dragged into it, either perforce, by the pressure of the Colonial Office, or by any hasty action on the part of Parliament, in the hope of producing a result which probably the populations of those provinces may not wish to see brought about.

I understand that the general election for the Legislature of Nova Scotia, according to the constitution of that colony, will take place in the month of May or June next; that this question has never been fairly placed before the people of that province at an election, and that it has never been discussed and decided by the people; and seeing that only three months or not so much will elapse before there will be an opportunity

of ascertaining the opinions of the population of Nova Scotia, I think it is at least a hazardous proceeding to pass this bill through Parliament, binding Nova Scotia, until the clear opinion of that province has been ascertained. If, at a time like this, when you are proposing a union which we all hope is to last for ever, you create a little sore, it will in all probability become a great sore in a short time, and it may be that the intentions of Parliament will be almost entirely frustrated by the haste with which this measure is being pushed forward.

The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think, in the early part of the evening, in answer to a question from this side, spoke of this matter as one of extreme urgency. Well, I cannot discover any urgency in the matter at all. What is urgent is this, that when done it ought to be done wisely, and with the full and free consent of all those populations who are to be bound by this Act and interested in its results. Unless the good-will of those populations is secured, in all probability the Act itself will be a misfortune rather than a blessing to the provinces to which it refers.

The right hon. Gentleman amused me in one part of his speech. He spoke of the filial piety—rather a curious term—of these provinces, and their great anxiety to make everything suit the ideas of this country; and this was said particularly with reference to the proposition for a Senate selected, not elected, for life, by the Governor-General of Canada. He said they were extremely anxious to follow as far as possible the institutions of the mother country. I have not the smallest objection to any people on the face of the earth following our institutions if they like them. Institutions which suit one country, as we all know, are not very likely to suit every other country. With regard to this particular case, the right hon. Gentleman said it is to be observed that Canada has had a nominated council, and has changed it for an elected one, and that surely they had a right if they pleased to

go back from an elected council to a nominated council. Well, nobody denies that, but nobody pretends that the people of Canada prefer a nominated council to an elected council. And all the wisdom of the wise men to whom the right hon. gentleman the member for Oxford has referred in such glowing terms, unless the experience of present and past times goes for nothing, is but folly if they have come to the conclusion that a nominated council on that continent must be better than an elected council. Still, if they wish it, I should not interfere and try to prevent it. But I venture to say that the clause enabling the Governor-General and his Cabinet to put seventy men in that council for life inserts into the whole scheme the germ of a malady which will spread, and which before very long will require an alteration of this Act and of the constitution of this new Confederation.

But the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that with regard to the representative assembly—which, I suppose, is to be called according to his phrase the House of Commons—they have adopted a very different plan. There they have not followed the course of this country. They have established their House of Representatives directly upon the basis of population. They have adopted the system which prevails in the United States, which upon every ten years' summing up of the census in that country the number of members may be changed, and is by law changed in the different States and districts as the rate of population may have changed. Therefore, in that respect his friends in Canada have not adopted the principle which prevails in this country, but that which prevails in the United States. I believe they have done that which is right, and which they have a right to do, and which is inevitable there. I regret very much that they have not adopted another system with regard to their council or senate, because I am satisfied—I have not a particle of doubt with regard to it - that we run a great

danger of making this Act work ill almost from the beginning.

They have the example of thirty-six States in the United States, in which the Senate is elected, and no man, however sanguine, can hope that seventy-two stereotyped provincial peers in Canada will work harmoniously with a body elected upon a system so wide and so general as that which prevails in the States of the American Union. There is one point about which the right hon. Gentleman said nothing, and which I think is so very important that the Member for Oxford, his predecessor in office, might have told us something about it. We know that Canada is a great country, and we know that the population is, or very soon will be, something like 4,000,000, and we may hope that, united under one government, the province may be more capable of defence. But what is intended with regard to the question of defence? Is everything to be done for the province? Is it intended to garrison its fortresses by English troops? At the present moment there are, I believe, in the province 12,000 or 15,000 men.

There are persons in this country, and there are some also in the North American provinces, who are ill-natured enough to say that not a little of the loyalty that is said to prevail in Canada has its price. I think it is natural and reasonable to hope that there is in that country a very strong attachment to this country. But if they are to be constantly applying to us for guarantees for railways, and for grants for fortresses, and for works of defence, then I think it would be far better for them and for us—cheaper for us and less demoralising for them—that they should become an independent State, and maintain their own fortresses, fight their own cause, and build up their own future without relying upon us. And when we know, as everybody knows, that the population of Canada is in a much better position

as regards the comforts of home, than is the great bulk of the population of this country, I say the time has come when it ought to be clearly understood that the taxes of England are no longer to go across the ocean to defray expenses of any kind within the Confederation which is about to be formed.

The right hon. Gentleman has never been an advocate for great expenditure in the colonies by the mother country. On the contrary, he has been one of the members of this House who have distinguished themselves by what I will call an honest system for the mother country, and what I believe is a wise system for the colonies. But I think that when a measure of this kind is being passed, having such stupendous results upon the condition and the future population of these great colonies, we have a right to ask that there should be some consideration for the revenue and for the taxpayers of this country. In discussing this Bill with the delegates from the provinces, I think it was the duty of the Colonial Secretary to have gone fairly into this question, and, if possible, to have arranged it to the advantage of the colony and the mother country.

I believe there is no delusion greater than this—that there is any party in the United States that wishes to commit any aggression upon Canada, or to annex Canada by force to the United States. There is not a part of the world, in my opinion, that runs less risk of aggression than Canada, except with regard to that foolish and impotent attempt of certain discontented not-long-ago subjects of the Queen, who have left this country. America has no idea of anything of the kind. No American statesman, no American political party, dreams for a moment of an aggression upon Canada, or of annexing Canada by force. And therefore, every farthing that you spend on your fortresses, and all that you do with the idea of shutting out American aggression, is money squandered through an hallucination which we ought

to get rid of. I have not risen for the purpose of objecting to the second reading of this Bill. Under the circumstances, I presume it is well that we should do no other than read it a second time. But I think the Government ought to have given a little more time. I think they have not treated the province of Nova Scotia with that tenderness, that generosity, and that consideration which is desirable when you are about to make so great a change in its affairs and in its future. For my share, I want the population of these provinces to do that which they believe to be best for their own interests—to remain with this country if they like it, in the most friendly manner, or to become independent States if they wish it. If they should prefer to unite themselves with the United States, I should not complain even of that. But whatever be their course, there is no man in this House or in those provinces who has a more sincere wish for their greatness and their welfare than I have who have taken the liberty thus to criticise this Bill.

# AMERICA.

# AMERICA.

## I.

### THE 'TRENT' AFFAIR.

### ROCHDALE, DECEMBER 4, 1861.

[During the excitement caused by the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, the envoys of the Slaveholders' Confederation, on board the *Trent* steamer, Mr. Bright's townsmen invited him to a Public Banquet, that they might have the opportunity of hearing his opinions on the American Civil War, and on the duty of England in regard to it. This speech was delivered on the occasion of that Banquet.]

When the Gentlemen who invited me to this dinner called upon me, I felt their kindness very sensibly, and now I am deeply grateful to my friends around me, and to you all, for the abundant manifestations of kindness with which I have been received to-night. I am, as you all know, surrounded at this moment by my neighbours and friends, and I may say with the utmost truth, that I value the good opinions of those who now hear my voice far beyond the opinions of any equal number of the inhabitants of this country selected from any other portion of it. You have, by this act of kindness that you have shown me, given proof that, in the main, you do not disapprove of my course and labours, that at least you are willing to express an opinion that the motives by

which I have been actuated have been honest and honourable to myself, and that that course has not been entirely without service to my country. Coming to this meeting, or to any similar meeting, I always find that the subjects for discussion appear too many, and far more than it is possible to treat at length. In these times in which we live, by the influence of the telegraph, and the steamboat, and the railroad, and the multiplication of newspapers, we seem continually to stand as on the top of an exceeding high mountain, from which we behold all the kingdoms of the earth and all the glory of them,—unhappily, also, not only their glory, but their follies, and their crimes, and their calamities.

Seven years ago, our eyes were turned with anxious expectation to a remote corner of Europe, where five nations were contending in bloody strife for an object which possibly hardly one of them comprehended, and, if they did comprehend it, which all sensible men amongst them must have known to be absolutely impracticable. Four years ago, we were looking still further to the East, where there was a gigantic revolt in a great dependency of the British Crown, arising mainly from gross neglect, and from the incapacity of England, up to that moment, to govern the country which it had known how to conquer. Two years ago, we looked South, to the plains of Lombardy, and saw a great strife there, in which every man in England took a strong interest; and we have welcomed, as the result of that strife, the addition of a great kingdom to the list of European States. Now, our eyes are turned in a contrary direction, and we look to the West. There we see a struggle in progress of the very highest interest to England and to humanity at large. We see there a nation which I shall call the Transatlantic English nation—the inheritor and partaker of all the historic glories of this country. We see it torn with intestine broils, and suffering from calamities from which for more than a century past—in fact, for more than

two centuries past—this country has been exempt. That struggle is of especial interest to us. We remember the description which one of our great poets gives of Rome,—

'Lone mother of dead empires.'

But England is the living mother of great nations on the American and on the Australian continents, which promise to endow the world with all her knowledge and all her civilization, and with even something more than the freedom she herself enjoys.

Eighty-five years ago, at the time when some of our oldest townsmen were very little children, there were, on the North American continent, Colonies, mainly of Englishmen, containing about three millions of souls. These Colonies we have seen a year ago constituting the United States of North America, and comprising a population of no less than thirty millions of souls. We know that in agriculture and manufactures, with the exception of this kingdom, there is no country in the world which in these arts may be placed in advance of the United States. With regard to inventions, I believe, within the last thirty years, we have received more useful inventions from the United States than from all the other countries of the earth. In that country there are probably ten times as many miles of telegraph as there are in this country, and there are at least five or six times as many miles of railway. The tonnage of its shipping is at least equal to ours, if it does not exceed ours. The prisons of that country—for, even in countries the most favoured, prisons are needful—have been models for other nations of the earth; and many European Governments have sent missions at different times to inquire into the admirable system of education so universally adopted in their free schools throughout the Northern States.

If I were to speak of that country in a religious aspect, I should say that, considering the short space of time to which

their history goes back, there is nothing on the face of the earth besides, and never has been, to equal the magnificent arrangement of churches and ministers, and of all the appliances which are thought necessary for a nation to teach Christianity and morality to its people. Besides all this, when I state that for many years past the annual public expenditure of the Government of that country has been somewhere between 10,000,000*l.* and 15,000,000*l.*, I need not perhaps say further; that there has always existed amongst all the population an amount of comfort and prosperity and abounding plenty such as I believe no other country in the world, in any age, has enjoyed.

This is a very fine, but a very true picture; yet it has another side to which I must advert. There has been one great feature in that country, one great contrast, which has been pointed to by all who have commented upon the United States as a feature of danger, as a contrast calculated to give pain. There has been in that country the utmost liberty to the white man, and bondage and degradation to the black man. Now rely upon it, that wherever Christianity lives and flourishes, there must grow up from it, necessarily, a conscience hostile to any oppression and to any wrong; and therefore, from the hour when the United States Constitution was formed, so long as it left there this great evil—then comparatively small, but now so great—it left there seeds of that which an American statesman has so happily described, of that 'irrepressible conflict' of which now the whole world is the witness. It has been a common thing for men disposed to carp at the United States to point to this blot upon their fair fame, and to compare it with the boasted declaration of freedom in their Deed and Declaration of Independence. But we must recollect who sowed this seed of trouble, and how and by whom it has been cherished.

Without dwelling upon this stain any longer, I should like to read to you a paragraph from the instructions understood to

have been given to the Virginian delegates to Congress, in the month of August, 1774, by Mr. Jefferson, who was perhaps the ablest man the United States had produced up to that time, and who was then actively engaged in its affairs, and who afterwards for two periods filled the office of President. He represented one of these very Slave States—the State of Virginia—and he says:—

'For the most trifling reasons, and sometimes for no conceivable reason at all, his Majesty has rejected laws of the most salutary tendency. The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those Colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibition, and by imposing duties which might amount to prohibition, have hitherto been defeated by his Majesty's negative,—thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice.'

I read this merely to show that, two years before the Declaration of Independence was signed, Mr. Jefferson, acting on behalf of those he represented in Virginia, wrote that protest against the course of the English Government which prevented the Colonists from abolishing the slave trade, preparatory to the abolition of slavery itself.

Well, the United States Constitution left the slave question for every State to manage for itself. It was a question too difficult to settle then, and apparently every man had the hope and belief that in a few years slavery itself would become extinct. Then there happened a great event in the annals of manufactures and commerce. It was discovered that in those States that article which we in this country now so much depend on, could be produced of the best quality necessary for manufacture, and at a moderate price. From that day to this the growth of cotton has increased there, and its consumption has increased here, and a value which no man dreamed of when Jefferson wrote that paper has been given to the slave and to slave industry. Thus it has grown

up to that gigantic institution which now threatens either its own overthrow or the overthrow of that which is a million times more valuable—the United States of America.

The crisis at which we have arrived—I say 'we,' for, after all, we are nearly as much interested as if I was making this speech in the city of Boston or the city of New York—the crisis, I say, which has now arrived, was inevitable. I say that the conscience of the North, never satisfied with the institution of slavery, was constantly urging some men forward to take a more extreme view of the question; and there grew up naturally a section—it may not have been a very numerous one—in favour of the abolition of slavery. A great and powerful party resolved at least upon a restraint and a control of slavery, so that it should not extend beyond the States and the area which it now occupies. But, if we look at the Government of the United States almost ever since the formation of the Union, we shall find the Southern power has been mostly dominant there. If we take thirty-six years after the formation of the present Constitution—I think about 1787—we shall find that for thirty-two of those years every President was a Southern man; and if we take the period from 1828 until 1860, we shall find that, on every election for President, the South voted in the majority.

We know what an election is in the United States for President of the Republic. There is a most extensive suffrage, and there is the ballot-box. The members of the House of Representatives are elected by the same suffrage, and generally they are elected at the same time. It is thus therefore almost inevitable that the House of Representatives is in accord in public policy with the President for the time being. Every four years there springs from the vote created by the whole people a President over that great nation. I think the world offers no finer spectacle than this; it offers no higher dignity; and there is no greater object of ambition on the political stage on which men are permitted to move.

You may point, if you will, to hereditary rulers, to crowns coming down through successive generations of the same family, to thrones based on prescription or on conquest, to sceptres wielded over veteran legions and subject realms,—but to my mind there is nothing so worthy of reverence and obedience, and nothing more sacred, than the authority of the freely chosen by the majority of a great and free people; and if there be on earth and amongst men any right divine to govern, surely it rests with a ruler so chosen and so appointed.

Last year the ceremony of this great election was gone through, and the South, which had been so long successful, found itself defeated. That defeat was followed instantly by secession, and insurrection, and war. In the multitude of articles which have been before us in the newspapers within the last few months, I have no doubt you have seen it stated, as I have seen it, that this question was very much like that upon which the Colonies originally revolted against the Crown of England. It is amazing how little some newspaper writers know, or how little they think you know. When the War of Independence was begun in America, ninety years ago, there were no representatives there at all. The question then was, whether a Ministry in Downing-street, and a corrupt and borough-mongering Parliament, should continue to impose taxes upon three millions of English subjects, who had left their native shores and established themselves in North America. But now the question is not the want of representation, because, as is perfectly notorious, the South is not only represented, but is represented in excess; for, in distributing the number of representatives, which is done every ten years, three out of every five slaves are counted as freemen, and the number of representatives from the Slave States is consequently so much greater than if the freemen, the white men only, were counted. From this cause the Southern States have twenty members more in

the House of Representatives than they would have if the members were apportioned on the same principle as in the Northern Free States. Therefore you will see at once that there is no comparison between the state of things when the Colonies revolted, and the state of things now, when this wicked insurrection has broken out.

There is another cause which is sometimes in England assigned for this great misfortune, which is, the protective theories in operation in the Union, and the maintenance of a high tariff. It happens with regard to that, unfortunately, that no American, certainly no one I ever met with, attributed the disasters of the Union to that cause. It is an argument made use of by ignorant Englishmen, but never by informed Americans. I have already shown you that the South, during almost the whole existence of the Union, has been dominant at Washington; and during that period the tariff has existed, and there has been no general dissatisfaction with it. Occasionally, there can be no doubt, their tariff was higher than was thought just, or reasonable, or necessary by some of the States of the South. But the first Act of the United States which levied duties upon imports, passed immediately after the Union was formed, recited that 'It is necessary for the encouragement and protection of manufactures to levy the duties which follow;' and during the war with England from 1812 to 1815, the people of the United States had to pay for all the articles they brought from Europe many times over the natural cost of those articles, on account of the interruption to the traffic by the English nation.

When the war was over, it was felt by everybody desirable that they should encourage manufactures in their own country; and seeing that England at that precise moment was passing a law to prevent any wheat coming from America until wheat in England had risen to the price of 84*s.* per quarter, we may be quite satisfied that the doctrine

of protection originally entertained did not find less favour at the close of the war in 1815.

There is one remarkable point with regard to this matter which should not be forgotten. Twelve months ago, at the meeting of the Congress of the United States, on the first Monday in December – when the Congress met, you recollect that there were various propositions of compromise, committee meetings of various kinds to try and devise some mode of settling the question between the North and the South, so that disunion might not go on—though I read carefully everything published in the English papers from the United States on the subject, I do not recollect that in a single instance the question of the tariff was referred to, or any change proposed or suggested in the matter as likely to have any effect whatever upon the question of Secession.

There is another point,—whatever might be the influence of the tariff upon the United States, it is as pernicious to the West as it is to the South; and further, that Louisiana, which is a Southern State and a seceded State, has always voted along with Pennsylvania until last year in favour of protection—protection for its sugar, whilst Pennsylvania wished protection for its coal and iron. But if the tariff was onerous and grievous, was that any reason for this great insurrection? Was there ever a country that had a tariff, especially in the article of food, more onerous and more cruel than that which we had in this country twenty years ago? We did not secede. We did not rebel. What we did was to raise money for the purpose of distributing among all the people perfect information upon the question; and many men, as you know, devoted all their labours, for several years, to teach the great and wise doctrine of free trade to the people of England. The price of a single gunboat, the equipment of a single regiment, the garrisoning of a single fort, the cessation of their trade for a single day, cost more than it would have cost to have spread among all

the intelligent people of the United States the most complete statement of the whole case; and the West and South could easily have revised, or, if need had been, have repealed the tariff altogether.

The question is a very different and a far more grave question. It is a question of slavery, and for thirty years it has constantly been coming to the surface, disturbing social life, and overthrowing almost all political harmony in the working of the United States. In the North there is no secession; there is no collision. These disturbances and this insurrection are found wholly in the South and in the Slave States; and therefore I think that the man who says otherwise, who contends that it is the tariff, or anything whatsoever else than slavery, is either himself deceived or endeavours to deceive others. The object of the South is this, to escape from the majority who wish to limit the area of slavery. They wish to found a Slave State freed from the influence and opinions of freedom. The Free States in the North now stand before the world as the advocates and defenders of freedom and civilization. The Slave States offer themselves for the recognition of a Christian nation, based upon the foundation, the unchangeable foundation in their eyes, of slavery and barbarism.

I will not discuss the guilt of the men who, ministers of a great nation only last year, conspired to overthrow it. I will not point out or recapitulate the statements of the fraudulent manner in which they disposed of the funds in the national exchequer. I will not point out by name any of the men, in this conspiracy, whom history will designate by titles they would not like to hear; but I say that slavery has sought to break up the most free government in the world, and to found a new State, in the nineteenth century, whose corner-stone is the perpetual bondage of millions of men.

Having thus described what appears to me briefly the literal truth of this matter, what is the course that

England would be expected to pursue? We should be neutral as far as regards mingling in the strife. We were neutral in the strife in Italy; but we were not neutral in opinion or sympathy; and we know perfectly well that throughout the whole of Italy at this moment there is a feeling that, though no shot was fired from an English ship, and though no English soldier trod their soil, yet still the opinion of England was potent in Europe, and did much for the creation of the Italian kingdom.

With regard to the United States, you know how much we hate slavery,—that is, some years ago we thought we knew; that we have given twenty millions sterling,—a million a year, or nearly so, of taxes for ever,—to free eight hundred thousand slaves in the English colonies. We knew, or thought we knew, how much we were in love with free government everywhere, although it might not take precisely the same form as our own government. We were for free government in Italy; we were for free government in Switzerland; and we were for free government, even under a republican form, in the United States of America; and with all this, every man would have said that England would wish the American Union to be prosperous and eternal.

Now, suppose we turn our eyes to the East, to the empire of Russia, for a moment. In Russia, as you all know, there has been one of the most important and magnificent changes of policy ever seen in any country. Within the last year or two, the present Emperor of Russia, following the wishes of his father, has insisted upon the abolition of serfdom in that empire; and twenty-three millions of human beings, lately serfs, little better than real slaves, have been raised to the ranks of freedom. Now, suppose that the millions of the serfs of Russia had been chiefly in the South of Russia. We hear of the nobles of Russia, to whom those serfs belonged in a great measure, that they have been hostile to this change; and there has been some danger that the peace of that empire

might be disturbed during the change. Suppose these nobles, for the purpose of maintaining in perpetuity the serfdom of Russia, and barring out twenty-three millions of your fellow-creatures from the rights of freedom, had established a great and secret conspiracy, and that they had risen in great and dangerous insurrection against the Russian Government,—I say that you, the people of England, although seven years ago you were in mortal combat with the Russians in the South of Europe,—I believe at this moment you would have prayed Heaven in all sincerity and fervour to give strength to the arm and success to the great wishes of the Emperor, and that the vile and atrocious insurrection might be suppressed.

Well, but let us look a little at what has been said and done in this country since the period when Parliament rose at the beginning of August. There have been two speeches to which I wish to refer, and in terms of approbation. The Duke of Argyll, a member of the present Government,—and, though I have not the smallest personal acquaintance with him, I am free to say that I believe him to be one of the most intelligent and liberal of his order,—the Duke of Argyll made a speech which was fair and friendly to the Government of the United States. Lord Stanley, only a fortnight ago, I think, made a speech which it is impossible to read without remarking the thought, the liberality, and the wisdom by which it is distinguished. He doubted, it is true, whether the Union could be restored. A man need not be hostile, and must not necessarily be unfriendly, to doubt that or the contrary; but he spoke with fairness and friendliness of the Government of the United States; and he said that they were right and justifiable in the course they took; and he gave us some advice,—which is now more important than at the moment when it was given,—that amid the various incidents and accidents of a struggle of this nature, it became a people like this to be very moderate, very calm, and to

avoid, as much as possible, any feeling of irritation, which sometimes arises, and sometimes leads to danger.

I mention these two speeches as from Englishmen of great distinction in this country—speeches which I believe will have a beneficial effect on the other side of the Atlantic. Lord John Russell, in the House of Commons, during the last session, made a speech also, in which he rebuked the impertinence of a young Member of the House who had spoken about the bursting of the 'bubble republic.' It was a speech worthy of the best days of Lord John Russell. But at a later period he spoke at Newcastle on an occasion something like this, when the inhabitants, or some portion of the inhabitants, of the town invited him to a public dinner. He described the contest in words something like these—I speak from memory only: 'The North is contending for empire, the South for independence.' Did he mean contending for empire, as England contends for it when making some fresh conquest in India? If he meant that, what he said was not true. But I recollect Lord John Russell, some years ago, in the House of Commons, on an occasion when I made some observation as to the unreasonable expenditure of our colonies, and said that the people of England should not be taxed to defray expenses which the colonies themselves were well able to bear, turned to me with a sharpness which was not necessary, and said, 'The honourable Member has no objection to make a great empire into a little one; but I have.' Perhaps if he had lived in the United States, if he was a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives there, he would doubt whether it was his duty to consent at once to the destruction of a great country by separation, it may be into two hostile camps, or whether he would not try all the means which were open to him, and would be open to the Government, to avert so unlooked-for and so dire a calamity.

There are other speeches that have been made. I will not refer to them by any quotation,—I will not, out of pity to

some of the men who uttered them. I will not bring their names even before you, to give them an endurance which I hope they will not otherwise obtain. I leave them in the obscurity which they so richly merit. But you know as well as I do, that, of all the speeches made since the end of the last session of Parliament by public men, by politicians, the majority of them have either displayed a strange ignorance of American affairs, or a stranger absence of that cordiality and friendship which, I maintain, our American kinsmen have a right to look for at our hands.

And if we part from the speakers and turn to the writers, what do we find there? We find that which is reputed abroad, and has hitherto been believed in at home, as the most powerful representative of English opinion—at least of the richer classes—we find in that particular newspaper there has not been since Mr. Lincoln took office, in March last, as President of the United States, one fair and honourable and friendly article on American affairs. Some of you, I dare say, read it; but, fortunately, every district is now so admirably supplied with local newspapers, that I trust in all time to come the people of England will drink of purer streams nearer home, and not of those streams which are muddled by party feeling and political intrigue, and by many motives that tend to anything rather than the enlightenment and advantage of the people. It is said,—that very paper has said over and over again,—'Why this war? Why not separate peaceably? Why this fratricidal strife?' I hope it is equally averse to fratricidal strife in other districts; for if it be true that God made of one blood all the families of man to dwell on the face of all the earth, it must be fratricidal strife whether we are slaughtering Russians in the Crimea or bombarding towns on the sea-coast of the United States.

Now no one will expect that I should stand forward as the advocate of war, or as the defender of that great sum of all

crimes which is involved in war. But when we are discussing a question of this nature, it is only fair that we should discuss it upon principles which are acknowledged not only in the country where the strife is being carried on, but are universally acknowledged in this country. When I discussed the Russian war, seven or eight years ago, I always condemned it, on principles which were accepted by the Government and people of England, and I took my facts from the blue-books presented to Parliament. I take the liberty, then, of doing that in this case; and I say that, looking at the principles avowed in England, and at its policy, there is no man, who is not absolutely a non-resistant in every sense, who can fairly challenge the conduct of the American Government in this war. It would be a curious thing to find that the party in this country which on every public question affecting England is in favour of war at any cost, when they come to speak of the duty of the Government of the United States, is in favour 'of peace at any price.'

I want to know whether it has ever been admitted by politicians, or statesmen, or people, that a great nation can be broken up at any time by any particular section of any part of that nation. It has been tried occasionally in Ireland, and if it had succeeded history would have said that it was with very good cause. But if anybody tried now to get up a secession or insurrection in Ireland,—and it would be infinitely less disturbing to everything than the secession in the United States, because there is a boundary which nobody can dispute—I am quite sure the *Times* would have its 'Special Correspondent,' and would describe with all the glee and exultation in the world the manner in which the Irish insurrectionists were cut down and made an end of.

Let any man try in this country to restore the heptarchy, do you think that any portion of the people would think that the project could be tolerated for a moment? But if you look at a map of the United States, you will see that

there is no country in the world, probably, at this moment, where any plan of separation between the North and the South, as far as the question of boundary is concerned, is so surrounded with insurmountable difficulties. For example, Maryland is a Slave State; but Maryland, by a large majority, voted for the Union. Kentucky is a Slave State, one of the finest in the Union, and containing a fine people; Kentucky has voted for the Union, but has been invaded from the South. Missouri is a Slave State; but Missouri has not seceded, and has been invaded by the South, and there is a secession party in that State. There are parts of Virginia which have formed themselves into a new State, resolved to adhere to the North; and there is no doubt a considerable Northern and Union feeling in the State of Tennessee. I have no doubt there is in every other State. In fact, I am not sure that there is not now within the sound of my voice a citizen of the State of Alabama, who could tell you that in his State the question of secession has never been put to the vote; and that there are great numbers of men, reasonable and thoughtful and just men, in that State, who entirely deplore the condition of things there existing.

Then, what would you do with all those States, and with what we may call the loyal portion of the people of those States? Would you allow them to be dragooned into this insurrection, and into the formation or the becoming parts of a new State, to which they themselves are hostile? And what would you do with the City of Washington? Washington is in a Slave State. Would anybody have advised that President Lincoln and his Cabinet, with all the members of Congress, of the House of Representatives and the Senate, from the North, with their wives and children, and everybody else who was not positively in favour of the South, should have set off on their melancholy pilgrimage northwards, leaving that capital, hallowed to them by such associations,—having its name even from the father of their country,—leaving Washington

to the South, because Washington is situated in a Slave State?

Again, what do you say to the Mississippi River, as you see it upon the map, the 'father of waters,' rolling its gigantic stream to the ocean? Do you think that the fifty millions which one day will occupy the banks of that river northward, will ever consent that its great stream shall roll through a foreign, and it may be a hostile State? And more, there are four millions of negroes in subjection. For them the American Union is directly responsible. They are not secessionists; they are now, as they always were, not citizens nor subjects, but legally under the care and power of the Government of the United States. Would you consent that these should be delivered up to the tender mercies of their task-masters, the defenders of slavery as an everlasting institution?

But if all had been surrendered without a struggle, what then? What would the writers in this newspaper and other newspapers have said? If a bare rock in your empire, that would not keep a goat—a single goat—alive, be touched by any foreign power, the whole empire is roused to resistance; and if there be, from accident or passion, the smallest insult to your flag, what do your newspaper writers say upon the subject, and what is said in all your towns and upon all your Exchanges? I will tell you what they would have said if the Government of the Northern States had taken their insidious and dishonest advice. They would have said the great Republic was a failure, that democracy had murdered patriotism, that history afforded no example of such meanness and of such cowardice; and they would have heaped unmeasured obloquy and contempt upon the people and Government who had taken that course.

They tell you, these candid friends of the United States,—they tell you that all freedom is gone; that the Habeas Corpus Act, if they ever had one, is known no longer; and that any man may be arrested at the dictum of the

President or of the Secretary of State. Well, but in 1848 you recollect, many of you, that there was a small insurrection in Ireland. It was an absurd thing altogether; but what was done then? I saw, in one night, in the House of Commons, a bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act passed through all its stages. What more did I see? I saw a bill brought in by the Whig Government of that day, Lord John Russell being the Premier, which made speaking against the Government and against the Crown—which up to that time had been sedition—which proposed to make it felony; and it was only by the greatest exertions of a few of the Members that the Act, in that particular, was limited to a period of two years. In the same session a bill was brought in called an Alien Bill, which enabled the Home Secretary to take any foreigner whatsoever, not being a naturalized Englishman, and in twenty-four hours to send him out of the country. Although a man might have committed no crime, this might be done to him, apparently only on suspicion.

But suppose that an insurgent army had been so near to London that you could see its outposts from every suburb of your Capital, what then do you think would have been the regard of the Government of Great Britain for personal liberty, if it interfered with the necessities, and, as they might think, the salvation of the State? I recollect, in 1848, when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended in Ireland, that a number of persons in Liverpool, men there of position and of wealth, presented a petition to the House of Commons, praying—what? That the Habeas Corpus Act should not be suspended? No. They were not content with its suspension in Ireland; and they prayed the House of Commons to extend that suspension to Liverpool. I recollect that at that time—and I am sure my friend Mr. Wilson will bear me out in what I say—the Mayor of Liverpool telegraphed to the Mayor of Manchester, and that messages were sent on to London nearly every hour.

The Mayor of Manchester heard from the Mayor of Liverpool that certain Irishmen in Liverpool, conspirators, or fellow-conspirators with those in Ireland, were going to burn the cotton warehouses in Liverpool and the cotton mills of Lancashire. I read that petition from Liverpool. I took it from the table of the House of Commons, and read it, and I handed it over to a statesman of great eminence, who has been but just removed from us—I refer to Sir James Graham, a man not second to any in the House of Commons for his knowledge of affairs and for his great capacity—I handed to him that petition. He read it; and after he had read it, he rose from his seat, and laid it upon the table with a gesture of abhorrence and disgust. Now that was a petition from the town of Liverpool, in which some persons have been making themselves very ridiculous of late by reason of their conduct on this American question.

There is one more point. It has been said, 'How much better it would be'—not for the United States, but—'for us, that these States should be divided.' I recollect meeting a gentleman in Bond-street one day before the session was over. He was a rich man, and one whose voice is much heard in the House of Commons; but his voice is not heard when he is on his legs, but when he is cheering other speakers; and he said to me: 'After all, this is a sad business about the United States; but still I think it very much better that they should be split up. In twenty years,' or in fifty years, I forget which it was, 'they will be so powerful that they will bully all Europe.' And a distinguished Member of the House of Commons—distinguished there by his eloquence, distinguished more by his many writings—I mean Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton—he did not exactly express a hope, but he ventured on something like a prediction, that the time would come when there would be, I do not know how many, but about as many independent States on the American Continent as you can count upon your fingers.

There cannot be a meaner motive than this I am speaking of, in forming a judgment on this question,—that it is 'better for us'—for whom? the people of England, or the Government of England?—that the United States should be severed, and that the North American continent should be as the continent of Europe is, in many States, and subject to all the contentions and disasters which have accompanied the history of the States of Europe. I should say that, if a man had a great heart within him, he would rather look forward to the day when, from that point of land which is habitable nearest to the Pole, to the shores of the Great Gulf, the whole of that vast continent might become one great confederation of States,—without a great army, and without a great navy,—not mixing itself up with the entanglements of European politics,—without a custom-house inside, through the whole length and breadth of its territory,—and with freedom everywhere, equality everywhere, law everywhere, peace everywhere,—such a confederation would afford at least some hope that man is not forsaken of Heaven, and that the future of our race may be better than the past.

It is a common observation, that our friends in America are very irritable. And I think it is very likely, of a considerable number of them, to be quite true. Our friends in America are involved in a great struggle. There is nothing like it before in their or in any history. No country in the world was ever more entitled, in my opinion, to the sympathy and the forbearance of all friendly nations, than are the United States at this moment. They have there some newspapers that are no wiser than ours. They have there some papers, which, up to the election of Mr. Lincoln, were his bitterest and most unrelenting foes, who, when the war broke out, and it was not safe to take the line of Southern support, were obliged to turn round and to appear to support the prevalent opinion of the country. But they undertook to serve the South in another way, and that was by exaggerating

every difficulty and misstating every fact, if so doing could serve their object of creating distrust between the people of the Northern States and the people of this United Kingdom. If the *Times* in this country has done all that it could do to poison the minds of the people of England, and to irritate the minds of the people of America, the *New York Herald*, I am sorry to say, has done, I think, all that it could, or all that it dared to do, to provoke mischief between the Government in Washington and the Government in London.

Now there is one thing which I must state that I think they have a solid reason to complain of; and I am very sorry to have to mention it, because it blames our present Foreign Minister, against whom I am not anxious to say a word, and, recollecting his speech in the House of Commons, I should be slow to conclude that he had any feeling hostile to the United States Government. You recollect that during the session—it was on the 14th of May—a Proclamation came out which acknowledged the South as a belligerent power, and proclaimed the neutrality of England. A little time before that, I forget how many days, Mr. Dallas, the late Minister from the United States, had left London for Liverpool and America. He did not wish to undertake any affairs for his Government, by which he was not appointed,—I mean that of President Lincoln,—and he left what had to be done to his successor, who was on his way, and whose arrival was daily expected. Mr. Adams, the present Minister from the United States, is a man whom, if he lived in England, you would speak of as belonging to one of the noblest families of the country. His father and his grandfather were Presidents of the United States. His grandfather was one of the great men who achieved the independence of the United States. There is no family in that country having more claims upon what I should call the veneration and the affection of the people than the family of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams came to this country. He arrived in London on the night of the 13th of May. On the 14th, that Proclamation was issued. It was known that he was coming; but he was not consulted; the Proclamation was not delayed for a day, although there was nothing pressing, no reason why the Proclamation should not have been notified to him. If communications of a friendly nature had taken place with him and with the American Government, they could have found no fault with this step, because it was perhaps inevitable, before the struggle had proceeded far, that this Proclamation would be issued. But I have the best reasons for knowing that there is no single thing that has happened during the course of these events which has created more surprise, more irritation, and more distrust in the United States, with respect to this country, than the fact that that Proclamation was not delayed one single day, until the Minister from America could come here, and until it could be done, if not with his consent, or his concurrence, yet in that friendly manner that would probably have avoided all the unpleasantness which has occurred.

Now I am obliged to say—and I say it with the utmost pain—that if we have not done things that are plainly hostile to the North, and if we have not expressed affection for slavery, and, outwardly and openly, hatred for the Union,—I say that there has not been that friendly and cordial neutrality which, if I had been a citizen of the United States, I should have expected; and I say further, that, if there has existed considerable irritation at that, it must be taken as a measure of the high appreciation which the people of those States place upon the opinion of the people of England. If I had been addressing this audience ten days ago, so far as I know, I should have said just what I have said now; and although, by an untoward event, circumstances are somewhat, even considerably, altered, yet I have thought it desirable to make this statement, with a view, so far as I am able to do it,

to improve the opinion of England, and to assuage feelings of irritation in America, if there be any, so that no further difficulties may arise in the progress of this unhappy strife.

But there has occurred an event which was announced to us only a week ago, which is one of great importance, and it may be one of some peril. It is asserted that what is called 'international law' has been broken by the seizure of the Southern Commissioners on board an English trading steamer by a steamer of war of the United States. Now, what is international law? You have heard that the opinions of the law officers of the Crown are in favour of this view of the case—that the law has been broken. I am not at all going to say that it has not. It would be imprudent in me to set my opinion on a legal question which I have only partially examined, against their opinion on the same question, which I presume they have carefully examined. But this I say, that international law is not to be found in an Act of Parliament—it is not in so many clauses. You know that it is difficult to find the law. I can ask the Mayor, or any magistrate around me, whether it is not very difficult to find the law, even when you have found the Act of Parliament, and found the clause. But when you have no Act of Parliament, and no clause, you may imagine that the case is still more difficult.

Now, maritime law, or international law, consists of opinions and precedents for the most part, and it is very unsettled. The opinions are the opinions of men of different countries, given at different times; and the precedents are not always like each other. The law is very unsettled, and, for the most part, I believe it to be exceedingly bad. In past times, as you know from the histories you read, this country has been a fighting country; we have been belligerents, and, as belligerents, we have carried maritime law, by our own powerful hand, to a pitch that has been very oppressive to foreign, and especially so to neutral nations. Well,

now, for the first time, unhappily,—almost for the first time in our history for the last two hundred years,—we are not belligerents, but neutrals; and we are disposed to take, perhaps, rather a different view of maritime and international law.

Now, the act which has been committed by the American steamer, in my opinion, whether it was legal or not, was both impolitic and bad. That is my opinion. I think it may turn out, almost certainly, that, so far as the taking of those men from that ship was concerned, it was an act wholly unknown to, and unauthorized by, the American Government. And if the American Government believe, on the opinion of their law officers, that the act is illegal, I have no doubt they will make fitting reparation; for there is no Government in the world that has so strenuously insisted upon modifications of international law, and been so anxious to be guided always by the most moderate and merciful interpretation of that law.

Now, our great advisers of the *Times* newspaper have been persuading people that this is merely one of a series of acts which denote the determination of the Washington Government to pick a quarrel with the people of England. Did you ever know anybody who was not very nearly dead drunk, who, having as much upon his hands as he could manage, would offer to fight everybody about him? Do you believe that the United States Government, presided over by President Lincoln, so constitutional in all his acts, so moderate as he has been—representing at this moment that great party in the United States, happily now in the ascendancy, which has always been especially in favour of peace, and especially friendly to England—do you believe that such a Government, having now upon its hands an insurrection of the most formidable character in the South, would invite the armies and the fleets of England to combine with that insurrection, and, it might be, to render it impossible that the Union should ever again be restored? I say, that single

statement, whether it came from a public writer or a public speaker, is enough to stamp him for ever with the character of being an insidious enemy of both countries.

Well, now, what have we seen during the last week? People have not been, I am told—I have not seen much of it—quite as calm as sensible men should be. Here is a question of law. I will undertake to say, that when you have from the United States Government—if they think the act legal—a statement of their view of the case, they will show you that, fifty or sixty years ago, during the wars of that time, there were scores of cases that were at least as bad as this, and some infinitely worse. And if it were not so late to-night—and I am not anxious now to go into the question further—I could easily place before you cases of extreme outrage committed by us when we were at war, and for many of which, I am afraid, little or no reparation was offered. But let us bear this in mind, that during this struggle incidents and accidents will happen. Bear in mind the advice of Lord Stanley, so opportune and so judicious. Do not let your newspapers, or your public speakers, or any man, take you off your guard, and bring you into that frame of mind under which your Government, if it desires war, may be driven to engage in it; for one may be almost as fatal and as evil as the other.

What can be more monstrous than that we, as we call ourselves, to some extent, an educated, a moral, and a Christian nation—at a moment when an accident of this kind occurs, before we have made a representation to the American Government, before we have heard a word from it in reply—should be all up in arms, every sword leaping from its scabbard, and every man looking about for his pistols and his blunderbusses? I think the conduct pursued—and I have no doubt just the same is pursued by a certain class in America—is much more the conduct of savages than of Christian and civilized men. No, let us be calm. You

recollect how we were dragged into the Russian war—how we 'drifted' into it. You know that I, at least, have not upon my head any of the guilt of that fearful war. You know that it cost one hundred millions of money to this country; that it cost at least the lives of forty thousand Englishmen; that it disturbed your trade; that it nearly doubled the armies of Europe; that it placed the relations of Europe on a much less peaceful footing than before; and that it did not effect one single thing of all those that it was promised to effect.

I recollect speaking on this subject, within the last two years, to a man whose name I have already mentioned, Sir James Graham, in the House of Commons. He was a Minister at the time of that war. He was reminding me of a severe onslaught which I had made upon him and Lord Palmerston for attending a dinner at the Reform Club when Sir Charles Napier was appointed to the command of the Baltic fleet; and he remarked, 'What a severe thrashing' I had given them in the House of Commons! I said, 'Sir James, tell me candidly, did you not deserve it?' He said, 'Well, you were entirely right about that war; we were entirely wrong, and we never should have gone into it.' And this is exactly what everybody will say, if you go into a war about this business, when it is over. When your sailors and soldiers, so many of them as may be slaughtered, are gone to their last account; when your taxes are increased, your business permanently—it may be—injured; and when embittered feelings for generations have been created between America and England—then your statesmen will tell you that 'we ought not to have gone into the war.'

But they will very likely say, as many of them tell me, 'What could we do in the frenzy of the public mind?' Let them not add to the frenzy, and let us be careful that nobody drives us into that frenzy. Remembering the past, remembering at this moment the perils of a friendly people, and seeing the difficulties by which they are surrounded, let us,

I entreat of you, see if there be any real moderation in the people of England, and if magnanimity, so often to be found amongst individuals, is absolutely wanting in a great nation.

Now, Government may discuss this matter—they may arrange it—they may arbitrate it. I have received here, since I came into the room, a despatch from a friend of mine in London, referring to this matter. I believe some portion of it is in the papers this evening, but I have not seen them. He states that General Scott, whom you know by name, who has come over from America to France, being in a bad state of health—the General lately of the American army, and a man whose reputation in that country is hardly second to that which the Duke of Wellington held during his lifetime in this country—General Scott has written a letter on the American difficulty. He denies that the Cabinet of Washington had ordered the seizure of the Southern Commissioners, if found under a neutral flag. The question of legal right involved in the seizure, the General thinks a very narrow ground on which to force a quarrel with the United States. As to Messrs. Slidell and Mason being or not being contraband, the General answers for it, that, if Mr. Seward cannot convince Earl Russell that they bore that character, Earl Russell will be able to convince Mr. Seward that they did not. He pledges himself that, if this Government cordially agreed with that of the United States in establishing the immunity of neutrals from the oppressive right of search and seizure on suspicion, the Cabinet of Washington will not hesitate to purchase so great a boon to peaceful trading-vessels.

Now, then, before I sit down, let me ask you what is this people, about which so many men in England at this moment are writing, and speaking, and thinking, with harshness, I think with injustice, if not with great bitterness? Two centuries ago, multitudes of the people of this country found a refuge on the North American continent, escaping from the

tyranny of the Stuarts and from the bigotry of Laud. Many noble spirits from our country made great experiments in favour of human freedom on that continent. Bancroft, the great historian of his own country, has said, in his own graphic and emphatic language, 'The history of the colonization of America is the history of the crimes of Europe.' From that time down to our own period, America has admitted the wanderers from every clime. Since 1815, a time which many here remember, and which is within my lifetime, more than three millions of persons have emigrated from the United Kingdom to the United States. During the fifteen years from 1845 or 1846 to 1859 or 1860—a period so recent that we all remember the most trivial circumstances that have happened in that time—during those fifteen years more than two million three hundred and twenty thousand persons left the shores of the United Kingdom as emigrants for the States of North America.

At this very moment, then, there are millions in the United States who personally, or whose immediate parents, have at one time been citizens of this country. They found a home in the Far West; they subdued the wilderness; they met with plenty there, which was not afforded them in their native country; and they have become a great people. There may be persons in England who are jealous of those States. There may be men who dislike democracy, and who hate a republic; there may be even those whose sympathies warm towards the slave oligarchy of the South. But of this I am certain, that only misrepresentation the most gross or calumny the most wicked can sever the tie which unites the great mass of the people of this country with their friends and brethren beyond the Atlantic.

Now, whether the Union will be restored or not, or the South achieve an unhonoured independence or not, I know not, and I predict not. But this I think I know—that in

a few years, a very few years, the twenty millions of freemen in the North will be thirty millions, or even fifty millions—a population equal to or exceeding that of this kingdom. When that time comes, I pray that it may not be said amongst them, that, in the darkest hour of their country's trials, England, the land of their fathers, looked on with icy coldness and saw unmoved the perils and calamities of their children. As for me, I have but this to say: I am but one in this audience, and but one in the citizenship of this country; but if all other tongues are silent, mine shall speak for that policy which gives hope to the bondsmen of the South, and which tends to generous thoughts, and generous words, and generous deeds, between the two great nations who speak the English language, and from their origin are alike entitled to the English name.

# AMERICA.

## II.

### THE WAR AND THE SUPPLY OF COTTON.

BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 18, 1862.

I AM afraid there was a little excitement during a part of my honourable Colleague's speech, which was hardly favourable to that impartial consideration to which he appealed. He began by referring to a question—or, I might say, to two questions, for it was one great question in two parts,—which at this moment occupies the mind, and, I think, must afflict the heart of every thoughtful man in this country—the calamity which has fallen upon the county from which I come, and the strife which is astonishing the world on the other side of the Atlantic.

I shall not enter into details with regard to that calamity, because you have had already, I believe, meetings in this town, many details have been published, contributions of a generous character have been made, and you are doing—and especially, if I am rightly informed, are your artisans doing—their duty with regard to the unfortunate condition of the population amongst which I live. But this I may state in a sentence, that the greatest, probably the most prosperous, manufacturing industry that this country or the

world has ever seen, has been suddenly and unexpectedly stricken down, but by a blow which has not been unforeseen or unforetold. Nearly five hundred thousand persons—men, women, and children—at this moment are saved from the utmost extremes of famine, not a few of them from death, by the contributions which they are receiving from all parts of the country. I will not attempt here an elaborate eulogy of the generosity of the givers, nor will I endeavour to paint the patience and the gratitude of those who suffer and receive; but I believe the conduct of the country, with regard to this great misfortune, is an honour to all classes and to every section of this people.

Some have remarked that there is perfect order where there has been so much anxiety and suffering. I believe there is scarcely a thoughtful man in Lancashire who will not admit that one great cause of the patience and good conduct of the people, besides the fact that they know so much is being done for them, is to be found in the extensive information they possess, and which of late years, and now more than ever, has been communicated to them through the instrumentality of an untaxed press. Noble Lords who have recently spoken, official men, and public men, have taken upon them to tell the people of Lancashire that nobody has done wrong, and that, in point of fact, if it had not been for a family quarrel in that dreadful Republic, everything would have gone on smoothly, and that nobody can be blamed for our present sufferings.

Now, if you will allow me, I should like to examine for a few minutes whether this be true. If you read the papers with regard to this question, you will find that, barring whatever chance there may be of our again soon receiving a supply of cotton from America, the hopes of the whole country are directed to India. Our Government of India is not one of to-day. It is a Government that has lasted as long as the Government of the United States, and it has had

far more insurrections and secessions, not one of which, I suppose some in this meeting must regret, has been tolerated by our Government or recognised by France. Our Government in India has existed for a hundred years in some portion of the country where cotton is a staple produce of the land. But we have had under the name of a Government what I have always described as a piratical joint-stock company, beginning with Lord Clive, and ending, as I now hope it has ended, with Lord Dalhousie. And under that Government I will undertake to say that it was not in nature that you could have such improvement as should ever give you a fair supply of cotton.

Up to the year 1814, the whole trade of India was a monopoly of the East India Company. They took everything there that went there; they brought everything back that came here; they did whatsoever they pleased in the territories under their rule. I have here an extract from a report of a Member of Council in India, Mr. Richards, published in the year 1812. He reports to the Court of Directors, that the whole cotton produce of the district was taken, without leaving any portion of the avowed share of the Ryots, that is, the cultivators, at their own free disposal; and he says that they are not suffered to know what they shall get for it until after it has been far removed from their reach and from the country by exportation coastwise to Bombay; and he says further, that the Company's servants fixed the prices from ten to thirty per cent. under the general market rate in the districts that were not under the Company's rule. During the three years before the Company's monopoly was abolished, in 1814, the whole cotton that we received from India (I quote from the brokers' returns from Liverpool), was only 17,000 bales; in the three years afterwards, owing, no doubt, partly to the great increase in price, we received 551,000 bales, during which same three years the United States only sent us

611,000. Thus you see that in 1817, 1818, and 1819, more than forty years ago, the quantity we received from India was close upon, and in the year 1818 it actually exceeded, that which we received from the United States.

Well, now I come down to the year 1832, and I have then the report of another Member of Council, and beg every working man here, every man who is told that there is nobody to blame, to listen to one or two extracts from the report. Mr. Warden, Member of the Council, gave evidence in 1832 that the money-tax levied on Surat cotton was 56 rupees per candy, leaving the grower only 24 rupees, or rather less than ¾*d.* per pound. In 1846 there was so great a decay of the cotton-trade of Western India, that a committee was appointed in Bombay, partly of Members of the Chamber of Commerce and partly of servants of the Government, and they made a report in which they stated that from every candy of cotton—a candy is 7 cwt. or 784 lbs.—costing 80 rupees, which is 160 shillings in Bombay, the Government had taken 48 rupees as land-tax and sea-duty, leaving only 32 rupees, or less than ⅜*d.* per pound, to be divided among all parties, from the Bombay seller to the Surat grower.

In 1847 I was in the House of Commons, and I brought forward a proposition for a select committee to inquire into this whole question; for in that year Lancashire was on the verge of the calamity that has now overtaken it; cotton was very scarce, for hundreds of the mills were working short time, and many were closed altogether. That committee reported that, in all the districts of Bombay and Madras where cotton was cultivated, and generally over those agricultural regions, the people were in a condition of the most abject and degraded pauperism; and I will ask you whether it is possible for a people in that condition to produce anything great, or anything good, or anything constant, which the world requires?

It is not to be wondered at that the quality of the cotton

should be bad—so bad that it is illustrated by an anecdote which a very excellent man of the Methodist body told me the other day. He said that at a prayer-meeting, not more than a dozen miles from where I live, one of the ministers was earnest in supplication to the Supreme; he detailed, no doubt, a great many things which he thought they were in want of, and amongst the rest, a supply of cotton for the famishing people in that district. When he prayed for cotton, some man with a keen sense of what he had suffered, in response exclaimed, 'O Lord! but not Surat.'

Now, my argument is this, and my assertion is this, that the growth of cotton in India,—the growth of an article which was native and common in India before America was discovered by Europeans,—that the growth of that article has been systematically injured, strangled, and destroyed by the stupid and wicked policy of the Indian Government.

I saw, the other day, a letter from a gentleman as well acquainted with Indian affairs, perhaps, as any man in India,—a letter written to a member of the Madras Government,—in which he stated his firm opinion that, if it had not been for the Bombay Committee in 1846, and for my Committee in 1848, there would not have been any cotton sent from India at this moment to be worked up in Lancashire. Now, in 1846, the quantity of cotton coming from India had fallen to 94,000 bales. How has it increased since then? In 1859 it had reached 509,000 bales; in 1860, 562,000 bales; and last year, owing to the extraordinarily high price, it had reached 986,000 bales, and I suppose this year will be about the same as last year.

I think, in justification of myself and of some of those with whom I have acted, I am entitled to ask your time for a few moments, to show you what has been not so much done as attempted to be done to improve this state of things; and what has been the systematic opposition that we have had to contend with. In the year 1847, I moved for that Committee,

in a speech from which I shall read one short extract. I said that 'We ought not to forget that the whole of the cotton grown in America is produced by slave labour, and this, I think, all will admit,—that, no matter as to the period in which slavery may have existed, abolished it will ultimately be, either by peaceable means or by violent means. Whether it comes to an end by peaceable means or otherwise, there will in all probability be an interruption to the production of cotton, and the calamity which must in consequence fall upon a part of the American Union will be felt throughout the manufacturing districts of this country.'

The committee was not refused;—Governments do not always refuse committees; they do not much fear them on matters of this kind; they put as many men on as the mover of the committee does, and sometimes more, and they often consider a committee, as my honourable Colleague will tell you, rather a convenient way of burying an unpleasant question, at least for another session. The committee sat during the session of 1848, and it made a report, from which I shall quote, not an extract, but the sense of an extract. The evidence was very extensive, very complete, and entirely condemnatory of the whole system of the Indian Government with regard to the land and agricultural produce, and one might have hoped that something would have arisen from it, and probably something has arisen from it, but so slowly that you have no fruit,—nothing on which you can calculate, even up to this hour.

Well, in 1850, as nothing more was done, I thought it time to take another step, and I gave notice of a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to go to India for the express purpose of ascertaining the truth of this matter. I moved, 'That a Royal Commission proceed to India to inquire into the obstacles which prevent the increased growth of cotton in India, and to report upon any circumstance which may injuriously affect the economical and

industrial condition of the native population, being cultivators of the soil, within the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay.'

Now I shall read you one extract from my speech on that occasion, which refers to this question of peril in America. I said, 'But there is another point, that, whilst the production of cotton in the United States results from slave labour, whether we approve of any particular mode of abolishing slavery in any country or not, we are all convinced that it will be impossible in any country, and most of all in America, to keep between two and three millions of the population permanently in a state of bondage. By whatever means that system is to be abolished, whether by insurrection,—which I should deplore,—or by some great measure of justice from the Government,—one thing is certain, that the production of cotton must be interfered with for a considerable time after such an event has taken place; and it may happen that the greatest measure of freedom that has ever been conceded may be a measure the consequence of which will inflict mischief upon the greatest industrial pursuit that engages the labour of the operative population of this country.'

Now, it was not likely the Government could pay much attention to this, for at that precise moment the Foreign Office—then presided over by Lord Palmerston—was engaged with an English fleet in the waters of Greece, in collecting a bad debt for one Don Pacifico, a Jew, who made a fraudulent demand on the Greek Government for injuries said to have been committed upon him in Greece. Notwithstanding this, I called upon Lord John Russell, who was then the Prime Minister, and asked him whether he would grant the Commission I was going to move for. I will say this for him, he appeared to agree with me that it was a reasonable thing. I believe he saw the peril, and that my proposition was a proper one, but he said he wished he could communicate with Lord Dalhousie. But it was in the month of June, and he could not do that, and hear from him again before

the close of the session. He told me that Sir John Hobhouse, then President of the India Board, was very much against it; and I answered, 'Doubtless he is, because he speaks as the mouthpiece of the East India Company, against whom I am bringing this inquiry.'

Well, my proposition came before the House, and, as some of you may recollect, it was opposed by the President of the India Board, and the Commission was consequently not granted. I had seen Sir Robert Peel,—this was only ten days before his death,—I had seen Sir Robert Peel, acquainted as he was with Lancashire interests, and had endeavoured to enlist him in my support. He cordially and entirely approved of my motion, and he remained in the House during the whole of the time I was speaking; but when Sir John Hobhouse rose to resist the motion, and he found the Government would not consent to it, he then left his seat, and left the House. The night after, or two nights after, he met me in the lobby; and he said he thought it was but right he should explain why he left the House after the conversation he had held with me on this question before. He said he had hoped the Government would agree to the motion, but when he found they would not, his position was so delicate with regard to them and his own old party, that he was most anxious that nothing should induce him, unless under the pressure of some great extremity, to appear even to oppose them on any matter before the House. Therefore, from a very delicate sense of honour, he did not say what I am sure he would have been glad to have said, and the proposition did not receive from him that help which, if it had received it, would have surmounted all obstacles.

To show the sort of men who are made ministers—Sir John Hobhouse had on these occasions always a speech of the same sort. He said this: 'With respect to the peculiar urgency of the time, he could not say the honourable Gentleman had made out his case; for he found that the impor-

tation of cotton from all countries showed an immense increase during the last three years.' We know that the importation of cotton has shown an 'immense increase' almost every three years for the last fifty years. But it was because that increase was entirely, or nearly so, from one source, and that source one of extreme peril, that I asked for the inquiry for which I moved. He said he had a letter in his hand—and he shook it at me—from the Secretary of the Commercial Association of Manchester, in which the directors of that body declared by special resolution that my proposition was not necessary, that an inquiry might do harm, and that they were abundantly satisfied with everything that these lords of Leadenhall-street were doing. He said, 'Such was the letter of the Secretary of the Association, and it was a complete answer to the hon. Gentleman who had brought forward this motion.'

At this moment one of these gentlemen to whom I have referred, then President of the Board of Control, Governor of India, author, as he told a committee on which I sat, of the Affghan war, is now decorated with a Norman title—for our masters even after a lapse of eight hundred years ape the Norman style—sits in the House of Peers, and legislates for you, having neglected in regard to India every great duty which appertained to his high office; and to show that it is not only cabinets and monarchs who thus distribute honours and rewards, the President of that Commercial Association through whose instigation that letter was written is now one of the representatives of Manchester, the great centre of that manufacture whose very foundation is now crumbling into ruin.

But I was not, although discouraged, baffled. I went down to the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester, and along with Mr. Bazley, then the President of the Chamber, I believe, and Mr. Henry Ashworth, who is now the President of that Chamber, and many others, we determined to have

a Commission of Inquiry of our own. We raised a subscription of more than 2,000*l.*; we selected a gentleman—Mr. Alexander Mackay, the author of one of the very best books ever written by an Englishman upon America, *The Western World*—and we invited him to become our Commissioner, and, unfortunately for him, he accepted the office. He went to India, he made many inquiries, he wrote many interesting reports; but, like many others who go to India, his health declined; he returned from Bombay, but he did not live to reach home.

We were greatly disappointed at this on public grounds, besides our regret for the loss of one of so much private worth. Some of us, Mr. Bazley particularly, undertook the charge of publishing these reports, and a friend of Mr. Mackay's, now no longer living, undertook the editorship of them, and they were published in a volume called *Western India;* and that volume received such circulation as a work of that nature is likely to have.

In the year 1853 there came the proposition for the renewal of the East India Company's charter. I opposed that to the utmost of my power in the House of Commons, and some of you will recollect I came down here with Mr. Danby Seymour, the Member for Poole, a gentleman well acquainted with Indian affairs, and attended a meeting in this very hall, to denounce the policy of conferring the government of that great country for another twenty years upon a Company which had so entirely neglected every duty belonging to it except one—the duty of collecting taxes. In 1854, Colonel Cotton—now Sir Arthur Cotton, one of the most distinguished engineers in India—came down to Manchester. We had a meeting at the Town Hall, and he gave an address on the subject of opening the Godavery River, in order that it might form a mode of transit, cheap and expeditious, from the cotton districts to the north of that river; and it was proposed to form a joint-stock

company to do it, but unfortunately the Russian war came on and disturbed all commercial projects, and made it impossible to raise money for any—as some might call it—speculative purpose, like that of opening an Indian river.

Well, in 1857 there came the mutiny. What did our rulers do then? Sir Charles Wood, in 1538, had made a speech five hours long, most of it in praise of the government of the East India Company. In 1858—at the opening of the session in 1858, I think—the Government brought in a Bill to abolish that Company, and to establish a new form of government for India. That was exactly what we asked them to do in 1853; but, as in everything else, nothing is done until there comes an overwhelming calamity, when the most obtuse and perverse is driven from his position. In 1858 that Bill passed, under the auspices of Lord Stanley. It was not a Bill such as I think Lord Stanley approved when he was not a Minister; it was not a Bill such as I believe he would have brought in if he had been permitted by the House and the Cabinet to have brought in a better Bill. It abolished the East India Company, established a new Council, and left things to a great extent much in the same state as they were.

During the discussion of that Bill, I made a speech on Indian affairs, which I believe goes to the root of the matter. I protested then as now against the notion of governing one hundred and fifty millions of people—twenty different nations, with twenty different languages—from a little coterie of rulers in the city of Calcutta. I proposed that the country should be divided into five or six separate, and, as regards each other, independent Presidencies of equal rank, with a governor and council in each, and each government corresponding with, and dependent upon, and responsible to, a Secretary of State in this country. I am of opinion that if such a Government were established, one in each Presidency, and if there was a first-class engineer, with an efficient staff, whose business should be to determine what public works

should be carried on, some by the Government and some by private companies—I believe that ten years of such judicious labours would work an entire revolution in the condition of India; and if it had been done when I first began to move in this question, I have not the smallest doubt we might have had at this moment any quantity of cotton whatever that the mills of Lancashire require.

Well, after this, I am afraid some of my friends may feel, and my opponents will say, that it is very egotistical in me to have entered into these details. But I think, after this recapitulation, I am at liberty to say I am guiltless of that calamity which has fallen upon us. And I may mention that some friends of mine—Mr. John Dickinson, now Chairman of the Indian Reform Association, Mr. Bazley, one of the members for Manchester, Mr. Ashworth, the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester, and Mr. John Benjamin Smith, the Member for Stockport—present themselves at this moment to my eyes as those who have been largely instrumental in calling the attention of Parliament and of the country to this great question of the reform of our Government in India.

But I have been asked twenty, fifty times during the last twelve months, 'Why do you not come out and say something? Why can you not tell us something in this time of our great need?' Well, I reply, 'I told you something when speaking was of use; all I can say now is this, or nearly all, that a hundred years of crime against the negro in America, and a hundred years of crime against the docile natives of our Indian empire, are not to be washed away by the penitence and the suffering of an hour.'

But what is our position? for you who are subscribing your money here have a right to know. I believe the quantity of cotton in the United States is at this moment much less than many people here believe, and that it is in no condition to be forwarded and exported. And I suspect that

it is far more probable than otherwise, notwithstanding some of the strange theories of my honourable Colleague, that there never will again be in America a crop of cotton grown by slave labour. You will understand—I hope so, at least—that I am not undertaking the office of prophet, I am not predicting; I know that everything which is not absolutely impossible may happen, and therefore things may happen wholly different to the course which appears to me to be likely. But I say, taking the facts as they are before us—with that most limited vision which is given to mortals—the high probability is that there will never be another considerable crop, or one available for our manufactories, from slave labour in the United States.

We read the American papers, or the quotations from them in our own papers, but I believe we can form no adequate conception of the disorganization and chaos that now prevail throughout a great portion of the Southern States. It is natural to a state of war under the circumstances of society in that region. But then we may be asked, What are our sources of supply, putting aside India? There is the colony of Queensland, where enthusiastic persons tell you cotton can be grown worth 3*s.* a pound. True enough; but when labour is probably worth 10*s.* a-day, I am not sure you are likely to get any large supply of that material we so much want, at a rate so cheap that we shall be likely to use it. Africa is pointed to by a very zealous friend of mine; but Africa is a land of savages, and with its climate so much against European constitutions, I should not entertain the hope that any great relief at any early period can be had from that continent. Egypt will send us 30,000 or 40,000 bales more than last year; in all probability Syria and Brazil, with these high prices, will increase their production to some considerable extent; but I believe there is no country at present from which you can derive any very large supply, except you can get it from your own dependencies in

India. Now if there be no more cotton to be grown for two, or three, or four years in America, for our supply, we shall require, considering the smallness of the bales and the loss in working up the cotton—we shall require nearly 6,000,000 of additional bales to be supplied from some source.

I want to put to you one question. It has taken the United States twenty years, from 1840 up to 1860, to increase their growth of cotton from 2,000,000 bales to 4,000,000. How long will it take any other country, with comparatively little capital, with a thousand disadvantages which America did not suffer from—how long will it take any other country, or all other countries, to give us 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 additional bales of cotton? There is one stimulus—the only one that I know of; and although I have not recommended it to the Government, and I know not precisely what sacrifice it would entail, yet I shall mention it, and I do it on the authority of a gentleman to whom I have before referred, who is thoroughly acquainted with Indian agriculture, and whose family have been landowners and cultivators in India for sixty years. He says there is only one mode by which you can rapidly stimulate the growth of cotton in India, except that stimulus coming from the high prices for the time being,—he says that, if the Government would make a public declaration that for five years they would exempt from land-tax all land which during that time shall grow cotton, there would be the most extraordinary increase in the growth of that article which has ever been seen in regard to any branch of agriculture in the world.

I do not know how far that would act, but I believe the stimulus would be enormous,—the loss to the Government in revenue would be something, but the deliverance to the industry of Lancashire, if it succeeded, as my friend thinks, would of course be speedy, and perhaps complete. Short of this, I look upon the restoration of the prosperity of

Lancashire as distant. I believe this misfortune may entail ruin upon the whole working population, and that it may gradually engulf the smaller traders and those possessing the least capital. I do not say it will, because, as I have said, what is not impossible may happen,—but it may for years make the whole factory property of Lancashire almost entirely worthless. Well, this is a very dismal look-out for a great many persons in this country; but it comes, as I have said, —it comes from that utter neglect of their opportunities and their duties which has distinguished the Government of India.

Now, Sir, before I sit down I shall ask you to listen to me for a few moments on the other branch of this great question, which refers to that sad tragedy which is passing before our eyes in the United States of America. I shall not, in consequence of anything you have heard from my hon. Friend, conceal from you any of the opinions which I hold, and which I proposed to lay before you if he had not spoken. Having given to him, notwithstanding some diversity of opinion, a fair and candid hearing, I presume that I shall receive the same favour from those who may differ from me. If I had known that my hon. Friend was going to make an elaborate speech on this occasion, one of two things I should have done: I should either have prepared myself entirely to answer him, or I should have decided not to attend a meeting where there could by any possibility of chance have been anything like discord between so many—his friends and my friends—in this room.

Since I have been Member for Birmingham, Mr. Scholefield has treated me with the kindness of a brother. Nothing could possibly be more generous and more disinterested in every way than his conduct towards me during these several years, and therefore I would much rather—far rather—that I lost any opportunity like this of speaking on this question, than I would have come here and appeared to be at variance with him. But I am happy to say that this great

question does not depend upon the opinion of any man in Birmingham, or in England, or anywhere else. And therefore I could—anxious always, unless imperative duty requires, to avoid even a semblance of difference—I could with a clear conscience have abstained from coming to and speaking at this meeting.

But I observe that my hon. Friend endeavoured to avoid committing himself to what is called sympathy with the South. He takes a political view of this great question,—is disposed to deal with the matter as he would have dealt with the case of a colony of Spain or Portugal revolting in South America, or of Greece revolting from Turkey. I should like to state here what I once said to an eminent American. He asked me if I could give him an idea of the course of public opinion in this country from the moment we heard of the secession of the Cotton States; and I endeavoured to trace it in this way,—and I ask you to say whether it is a fair and full description.

I said—and my hon. Friend has admitted this—that when the revolt or secession was first announced, people here were generally against the South. Nobody thought then that the South had any cause for breaking up the integrity of that great nation. Their opinion was, and what people said, according to their different politics in this country was, 'They have a Government which is mild, and not in any degree oppressive; they have not what some people love very much, and what some people dislike,—they have not a costly monarchy, and an aristocracy, creating and living on patronage. They have not an expensive foreign policy; a great army; a great navy; and they have no suffering millions discontented and endeavouring to overthrow their Government;—all which things have been said against Governments in this country and in Europe a hundred times within our own hearing,'—and therefore, they said, 'Why should these men revolt?'

But for a moment the Washington Government appeared paralyzed. It had no army and no navy; everybody was traitor to it. It was paralyzed and apparently helpless; and in the hour when the government was transferred from President Buchanan to President Lincoln, many people—such was the unprepared state of the North, such was the apparent paralysis of everything there—thought there would be no war; and men shook hands with each other pleasantly, and congratulated themselves that the disaster of a great strife, and the mischief to our own trade, might be avoided. That was the opinion at that moment, so far as I can recollect, and could gather at the time, with my opportunities of gathering such opinion. They thought the North would acquiesce in the rending of the Republic, and that there would be no war.

Well, but there was another reason. They were told by certain public writers in this country that the contest was entirely hopeless, as they have been told lately by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am very happy that, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to decide to a penny what shall be the amount of taxes to meet public expenditure in England, he cannot decide what shall be the fate of a whole continent. It was said that the contest was hopeless, and why should the North continue a contest at so much loss of blood and treasure, and at so great a loss to the commerce of the whole world? If a man thought—if a man believed in his heart that the contest was absolutely hopeless—no man in this country had probably any right to form a positive opinion one way or the other—but if he had formed that opinion, he might think, 'Well, the North can never be successful; it would be much better that they should not carry on the war at all; and therefore I am rather glad that the South should have success, for by that the war will be the sooner put an end to.' I think this was a feeling that was abroad.

Now I am of opinion that, if we judge a foreign nation in

the circumstances in which we find America, we ought to apply to it our own principles. My hon. Friend has referred to the question of the *Trent*. I was not here last year, but I heard of a meeting—I read in the papers of a meeting held in reference to that affair in this very hall, and that there was a great diversity of opinion. But the majority were supposed to indorse the policy of the Government in making a great demonstration of force. And I think I read that at least one minister of religion took that view from this platform. I am not complaining of it. But I say that if you thought when the American captain, even if he had acted under the commands of his Government, which he had not, had taken two men most injurious and hostile to his country from the deck of an English ship—if you thought that on that ground you were justified in going to war with the Republic of North America, then I say you ought not to be very nice in judging what America should do in circumstances much more onerous than those in which you were placed.

Now, take as an illustration the Rock of Gibraltar. Many of you have been there, I dare say. I have: and among the things that interested me were the monkeys on the top of it, and a good many people at the bottom, who were living on English taxes. Well, the Rock of Gibraltar was taken and retained by this country when we were not at war with Spain, and it was retained contrary to every law of morality and honour. [A Voice: 'No! No!'] No doubt the Gentleman below is much better acquainted with the history of it than I am, but I may suggest to him that very likely we have read two different histories. But I will let this pass, and I will assume that it came into the possession of England in the most honourable way, which is, I suppose, by regular and acknowledged national warfare.

Suppose, at this moment, you heard, or the English Government heard, that Spain was equipping expeditions,

by land and sea, for the purpose of retaking that fortress and rock. Now, although it is not of the slightest advantage to any Englishman living, excepting to those who have pensions and occupations upon it; although every Government knows it, and although more than one Government has been anxious to give it up, and I hope this Government will send my friend, Mr. Cobden, to Madrid, with an offer that Gibraltar shall be ceded to Spain, as being of no use to this country, and only embittering, as statesmen have admitted, the relations between Spain and England,—and if he were to go to Madrid with an offer of the Rock of Gibraltar, I believe he might obtain a commercial treaty with Spain, that would admit every English manufacture and every article of English produce into that country at a duty of not more than ten per cent.;—I say, do you not think that, if you heard that Spain was about to retake that useless rock, mustering her legions and her fleets, the English Government would combine all the power of this country to resist it?

If that be so, then I think—seeing that there was a fair election two years ago, and that President Lincoln was fairly and honestly elected—that when the Southern leaders met at Montgomery in Alabama, on the 6th of March, and authorized the raising of a hundred thousand men, and when, on the 15th of April, they attacked Fort Sumter—not a fort of South Carolina, but a fort of the Union—then, upon all the principles that Englishmen and English Governments have ever acted upon, President Lincoln was justified in calling out seventy-five thousand men—which was his first call—for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of that nation, which was the main purpose of the oath which he had taken at his election.

Now I shall not go into a long argument upon this question, for the reason that a year ago I said what I thought it necessary to say upon it, and because I believe the question

is in the hand, not of my hon. Friend, nor in that of Lord Palmerston, nor in that even of President Lincoln, but it is in the hand of the Supreme Ruler, who is bringing about one of those great transactions in history which men often will not regard when they are passing before them, but which they look back upon with awe and astonishment some years after they are past. So I shall content myself with asking one or two questions. I shall not discuss the question whether the North is making war for the Constitution, or making war for the abolition of slavery.

If you come to a matter of sympathy with the South, or recognition of the South, or mediation or intervention for the benefit of the South, you should consider what are the ends of the South. Surely the United States Government is a Government at amity with this country. Its Minister is in London—a man honourable by family, as you know, in America, his father and his grandfather having held the office of President of the Republic. You have your own Minister just returned to Washington. Is this hypocrisy? Are you, because you can cavil at certain things which the North, the United States Government, has done or has not done, are you eagerly to throw the influence of your opinion into a movement which is to dismember the great Republic?

Is there a man here that doubts for a moment that the object of the war on the part of the South—they began the war—that the object of the war on the part of the South is to maintain in bondage four millions of human beings? That is only a small part of it. The further object is to perpetuate for ever the bondage of all the posterity of those four millions of slaves. [A few cries of 'No! No!'] You will hear that I am not in a condition to contest vigorously anything that may be opposed, for I am suffering, as nearly everybody is, from the state of the weather, and a hoarseness that almost hinders me from speaking. I could quote their own documents till midnight in proof of what

I say; and if I found a man who denied it, upon the evidence that had been offered, I would not offend him, or trouble myself by trying further to convince him.

The object is, that a handful of white men on that continent shall lord it over many millions of blacks, made black by the very Hand that made us white. The object is, that they should have the power to breed negroes, to work negroes, to lash negroes, to chain negroes, to buy and sell negroes, to deny them the commonest ties of family, or to break their hearts by rending them at their pleasure, to close their mental eye to but a glimpse even of that knowledge which separates us from the brute—for in their laws it is criminal and penal to teach the negro to read—to seal from their hearts the Book of our religion, and to make chattels and things of men and women and children.

Now I want to ask whether this is to be the foundation, as it is proposed, of a new slave empire, and whether it is intended that on this audacious and infernal basis England's new ally is to be built up. It has been said that Greece was recognized, and that other countries had been recognized. But Greece was not recognized till after she had fought Turkey for six years, and the Republics of South America, some of them, not till they had fought the mother country for a score of years. France did not recognize the United States of America till some, I think, six years, five certainly, after the beginning of the War of Independence, and even then it was received as a declaration of war by the English Government. I want to know who they are who speak eagerly in favour of England becoming the ally and friend of this great conspiracy against human nature.

Now I should have no kind of objection to recognize a country because it was a country that held slaves—to recognize the United States, or to be in amity with it. The question of slavery there, and in Cuba and in Brazil, is, as far as respects the present generation, an accident, and it would

be unreasonable that we should object to trade with and have political relations with a country, merely because it happened to have within its borders the institution of slavery, hateful as that institution is. But in this case it is a new State intending to set itself up on the sole basis of slavery. Slavery is blasphemously declared to be its chief corner-stone.

I have heard that there are, in this country, ministers of state who are in favour of the South; that there are members of the aristocracy who are terrified at the shadow of the Great Republic; that there are rich men on our commercial exchanges, depraved, it may be, by their riches, and thriving unwholesomely within the atmosphere of a privileged class; that there are conductors of the public press who would barter the rights of millions of their fellow-creatures that they might bask in the smiles of the great.

But I know that there are ministers of state who do not wish that this insurrection should break up the American nation; that there are members of our aristocracy who are not afraid of the shadow of the Republic; that there are rich men, many, who are not depraved by their riches; and that there are public writers of eminence and honour who will not barter human rights for the patronage of the great. But most of all, and before all, I believe,—I am sure it is true in Lancashire, where the working men have seen themselves coming down from prosperity to ruin, from independence to a subsistence on charity,—I say that I believe that the unenfranchised but not hopeless millions of this country will never sympathize with a revolt which is intended to destroy the liberty of a continent, and to build on its ruins a mighty fabric of human bondage.

When I speak to gentlemen in private upon this matter, and hear their own candid opinion,—I mean those who differ from me on this question,—they generally end by saying that the Republic is too great and too powerful, and that it is better for us—not by 'us' meaning you, but the governing

classes and the governing policy of England—that it should be broken up. But we will suppose that we are in New York or in Boston, discussing the policy and power of England. If any one there were to point to England,—not to the thirty-one millions of population in these islands, but to her one hundred and fifty millions in India, and nobody knows how many millions more in every other part of the globe,—might he not, whilst boasting that America has not covered the ocean with fleets of force, or left the bones of her citizens to blanch on a hundred European battle-fields,—might he not fairly say, that England is great and powerful, and that it is perilous for the world that she is so great?

But bear in mind that every declaration of this kind, whether from an Englishman who professes to be strictly English, or from an American strictly American, or from a Frenchman strictly French,—whether it asserts in arrogant strains that Britannia rules the waves, or speaks of 'manifest destiny' and the supremacy of the 'Stars and Stripes,' or boasts that the Eagles of one nation, having once overrun Europe, may possibly repeat the experiment,—I say all this is to be condemned. It is not truly patriotic; it is not rational; it is not moral. Then, I say, if any man wishes the Great Republic to be severed on that ground: in my opinion, he is doing that which tends to keep alive jealousies which, as far as he can prevent it, will never die; though if they do not die, wars must be eternal.

But then I shall be told that the people of the North do not like us at all. In fact, we have heard it to-night. It is not reasonable that they should like us. If an American be in this room to-night, will he feel that he likes my honourable Friend? But if the North does not like England, does anybody believe the South does? It does not appear to me to be a question of liking or disliking. Everybody knows that when the South was in power,—and it has been in power for the last fifty years,—everybody knows that hostility to this

country, wherever it existed in America, was cherished and stimulated to the utmost degree by some of those very men who are now leaders of this very insurrection.

My hon. Friend read a passage about the *Alabama*. I undertake to say that he is not acquainted with the facts about the *Alabama*. That he will acknowledge, I think. The Government of this country have admitted that the building of the *Alabama*, and her sailing from the Mersey, was a violation of international law. In America they say, and they say here, that the *Alabama* is a ship of war; that she was built in the Mersey; that she was built, and I have reason to believe it, by a member of the British Parliament; that she is furnished with guns of English manufacture; that she is manned almost entirely by Englishmen; and that these facts were represented, as I know they were represented, to the collector of customs in Liverpool, who pooh-poohed them, and said there was nothing in them. He was requested to send the facts up to London to the Customs' authorities, and their solicitor, not a very wise man, but probably in favour of breaking up the Republic, did not think them of much consequence; but afterwards the opinion of an eminent counsel, Mr. Collier, the Member for Plymouth, was taken, and he stated distinctly that what was being done in Liverpool was a direct infringement of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and that the Customs' authorities of Liverpool would be responsible for anything that happened in consequence.

When this opinion was taken to the Foreign Office the Foreign Office was a little astonished and a little troubled; and after they had consulted their own law officers, whose opinions agreed with that of Mr. Collier, they did what Government officers generally do, and as promptly,—a telegraphic message went down to Liverpool to order that this vessel should be seized, and she happened to sail an hour or two before the message arrived. She has never been into a Confederate port—they have not got any ports; she hoists

the English flag when she wants to come alongside a ship; she sets a ship on fire in the night, and when, seeing fire, another ship bears down to lend help, she seizes it, and pillages and burns it. I think that, if we were citizens of New York, it would require a little more calmness than is shown in this country to look at all this as if it was a matter with which we had no concern. And therefore I do not so much blame the language that has been used in America in reference to the question of the *Alabama*.

But they do not know in America so much as we know—the whole truth about public opinion here. There are ministers in our Cabinet as resolved to be no traitors to freedom, on this question, as I am; and there are members of the English aristocracy, and in the very highest rank, as I know for a certainty, who hold the same opinion. They do not know in America—at least, there has been no indication of it until the advices that have come to hand within the last two days—what is the opinion of the great body of the working classes in England. There has been every effort that money and malice could make to stimulate in Lancashire, amongst the suffering population, an expression of opinion in favour of the Slave States. They have not been able to get it. And I honour that population for their fidelity to principles and to freedom, and I say that the course they have taken ought to atone in the minds of the people of the United States for miles of leading articles, written by the London press,—by men who would barter every human right,—that they might serve the party with which they are associated.

But now I shall ask you one other question before I sit down,—How comes it that on the Continent there is not a liberal newspaper, nor a liberal politician, that has said, or has thought of saying, a word in favour of this portentous and monstrous shape which now asks to be received into the family of nations? Take the great Italian Minister, Count Cavour. You read some time ago in the papers part of a

despatch which he wrote on the question of America—he had no difficulty in deciding. Ask Garibaldi. Is there in Europe a more disinterested and generous friend of freedom than Garibaldi? Ask that illustrious Hungarian, to whose marvellous eloquence you once listened in this hall. Will he tell you that slavery has nothing to do with it, and that the slaveholders of the South will liberate the negroes sooner than the North through the instrumentality of the war? Ask Victor Hugo, the poet of freedom,—the exponent, may I not call him, of the yearnings of all mankind for a better time? Ask any man in Europe who opens his lips for freedom,—who dips his pen in ink that he may indite a sentence for freedom,—whoever has a sympathy for freedom warm in his own heart,—ask him,—he will have no difficulty in telling you on which side your sympathies should lie.

Only a few days ago a German merchant in Manchester was speaking to a friend of mine, and said he had recently travelled all through Germany. He said, 'I am so surprised,—I don't find one man in favour of the South.' That is not true of Germany only, it is true of all the world except this island, famed for freedom, in which we dwell. I will tell you what is the reason. Our London press is mainly in the hands of certain ruling West End classes; it acts and writes in favour of those classes. I will tell you what they mean. One of the most eminent statesmen in this country,—one who has rendered the greatest services to the country, though, I must say, not in an official capacity, in which men very seldom confer such great advantages upon the country,—he told me twice, at an interval of several months, 'I had no idea how much influence the example of that Republic was having upon opinion here, until I discovered the universal congratulation that the Republic was likely to be broken up.'

But, Sir, the Free States are the home of the working man. Now, I speak to working men particularly at this moment. Do you know that in fifteen years two million

five hundred thousand persons, men, women, and children, have left the United Kingdom to find a home in the Free States of America? That is a population equal to eight great cities of the size of Birmingham. What would you think of eight Birminghams being transplanted from this country and set down in the United States? Speaking generally, every man of these two and a half millions is in a position of much higher comfort and prosperity than he would have been if he had remained in this country. I say it is the home of the working man; as one of her poets has recently said,—

> 'For her free latch-string never was drawn in
> Against the poorest child of Adam's kin.'

And in that land there are no six millions of grown men—I speak of the Free States—excluded from the constitution of their country and its electoral franchise; there, you will find a free Church, a free school, free land, a free vote, and a free career for the child of the humblest born in the land. My countrymen who work for your living, remember this: there will be one wild shriek of freedom to startle all mankind if that American Republic should be overthrown.

Now for one moment let us lift ourselves, if we can, above the narrow circle in which we are all too apt to live and think; let us put ourselves on an historical eminence, and judge this matter fairly. Slavery has been, as we all know, the huge, foul blot upon the fame of the American Republic; it is a hideous outrage against human right and against Divine law; but the pride, the passion of man, will not permit its peaceable extinction. The slave-owners of our colonies, if they had been strong enough, would have revolted too. I believe there was no mode short of a miracle more stupendous than any recorded in Holy Writ that could in our time, or in a century, or in any time, have brought about the abolition of slavery in America, but the suicide which the South has committed and the war which it has begun.

Sir, it is a measureless calamity,—this war. I said the

Russian war was a measureless calamity, and yet many of your leaders and friends told you that it was a just war to maintain the integrity of Turkey, some thousands of miles off. Surely the integrity of your own country at your own doors must be worth as much as the integrity of Turkey. Is not this war the penalty which inexorable justice exacts from America, North and South, for the enormous guilt of cherishing that frightful iniquity of slavery for the last eighty years? I do not blame any man here who thinks the cause of the North hopeless and the restoration of the Union impossible. It may be hopeless; the restoration may be impossible. You have the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on that point. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, as a speaker, is not surpassed by any man in England, and he is a great statesman; he believes the cause of the North to be hopeless; that their enterprise cannot succeed.

Well, he is quite welcome to that opinion, and so is anybody else. I do not hold the opinion; but the facts are before us all, and, as far as we can discard passion and sympathy, we are all equally at liberty to form our own opinion. But what I do blame is this. I blame men who are eager to admit into the family of nations a State which offers itself to us, based upon a principle, I will undertake to say, more odious and more blasphemous than was ever heretofore dreamed of in Christian or Pagan, in civilized or in savage times. The leaders of this revolt propose this monstrous thing —that over a territory forty times as large as England, the blight and curse of slavery shall be for ever perpetuated.

I cannot believe, for my part, that such a fate will befall that fair land, stricken though it now is with the ravages of war. I cannot believe that civilization, in its journey with the sun, will sink into endless night in order to gratify the ambition of the leaders of this revolt, who seek to

> 'Wade through slaughter to a throne,
> And shut the gates of mercy on mankind'

I have another and a far brighter vision before my gaze. It may be but a vision, but I will cherish it. I see one vast confederation stretching from the frozen North in unbroken line to the glowing South, and from the wild billows of the Atlantic westward to the calmer waters of the Pacific main,—and I see one people, and one language, and one law, and one faith, and, over all that wide continent, the home of freedom, and a refuge for the oppressed of every race and of every clime.

# AMERICA.

## III.

### SLAVERY AND SECESSION.

### ROCHDALE, FEBRUARY 3, 1863.

[This speech was delivered at a public meeting held in the Public Hall, Rochdale, for the purpose of passing a resolution of thanks to the merchants of New York, for their generous contributions to the relief of the suffering population of the cotton districts.]

I FEEL as if we were in our places to-night, for we are met for the purpose of considering, and, I doubt not, of agreeing to a resolution expressive of our sense of the generosity of the merchants of New York, and other citizens of the United States, who have, in the midst of so many troubles and such great sacrifices, contributed to the relief of that appalling distress which has prevailed, and does still prevail, in this county.

I regard this transmission of assistance from the United States as a proof that the world moves onward in the direction of a better time. It is an evidence that, whatever may be the faults of ambitious men, and sometimes, may I not say, the crimes of Governments, the peoples are drawing together, and beginning to learn that it never was intended that they should be hostile to each other, but that every nation should

take a brotherly interest in every other nation in the world. There has been, as we all know, not a little jealousy between some portions of the people of this country and some portions of the people of the United States. Perhaps the jealousy has existed more on this side. I think it has found more expression here, probably through the means of the public press, than has been the case with them. I am not alluding now to the last two years, but as long as most of us have been readers of newspapers and observers of what has passed around us.

The establishment of independence, eighty years ago; the war of 1812; it may be, occasionally, the presumptuousness and the arrogance of a growing and prosperous nation on the other side of the Atlantic—these things have stimulated ill feeling and jealousy here, which have often found expression in language which has not been of the very kindest character. But why should there be this jealousy between these two nations? Mr. Ashworth has said, and said very truly, 'Are they not our own people?' I should think, as an Englishman, that to see that people so numerous, so powerful, so great in so many ways, should be to us a cause, not of envy or of fear, but rather of glory and rejoicing.

I have never visited the United States, but I can understand the pleasure with which an Englishman lands in a country three thousand miles off, and finds that every man he meets speaks his own language. I recollect some years ago reading a most amusing speech delivered by a Suffolk country gentleman, at a Suffolk agricultural dinner, I think it was, though I do not believe the speeches of Suffolk country gentlemen at Suffolk agricultural meetings are generally very amusing. But this was a very amusing speech. This gentleman had travelled; he had been in the United States, and being intelligent enough to admire much that he saw there, he gave to his audience a description of some things that he had seen; but that which seemed to delight him most was this, that when he stepped from the steamer

on to the quay at New York, he found that 'everybody spoke Suffolk.' Now, if anybody from this neighbourhood should visit New York, I am afraid that he will not find everybody speaking Lancashire. Our dialect, as you know, is vanishing into the past. It will be preserved to future times, partly in the works of Tim Bobbin, but in a very much better and more instructive form in the admirable writings of one of my oldest and most valued friends, who is now upon this platform. But if we should not find the people of New York speaking Lancashire, we should find them speaking English. And if we followed a little further, and asked them what they read, we should find that they read all the books that we read that are worth reading, and a good many of their own, some of which have not yet reached us; that there are probably more readers in the United States of Milton, and Shakespeare, and Dryden, and Pope, and Byron, and Wordsworth, and Tennyson, than are to be found in this country; because, I think, it will probably be admitted by everybody who understands the facts of both countries, that out of the twenty millions of population in the Free States of America, there are more persons who can read well than there are in the thirty millions of population of Great Britain and Ireland.

And if we leave their literature and turn to their laws, we shall find that their laws have the same basis as ours, and that many of the great and memorable judgments of our greatest judges and lawyers are of high authority with them. If we come to that priceless possession which we have perhaps more clearly established than any other people in Europe, that of personal freedom, we shall find that in the Free States of America personal freedom is as much known, as well established, as fully appreciated, and as completely enjoyed as it is now in this country. And if we come to the form of their government, we shall find that it is in its principle, in its essence, not very dissimilar from that which

our Constitution professes in this kingdom. The difference is this, that our Constitution has never yet been fully enjoyed by the people; the House in which forty-eight hours hence I may be sitting, is not as full and fair and free a representation of the people as is the House of Representatives that assembles at Washington. But, if there be differences, are there not great points of agreement, and are there any of these differences that justify us or them in regarding either nation as foreign or hostile?

Now, the people of Europe owe much more than they are often aware of to the Constitution of the United States of America, and to the existence of that great Republic. The United States have been in point of fact an ark of refuge to the people of Europe, when fleeing from the storms and the revolutions of the old continent. They have been, as far as the artisans and labouring population of this country are concerned, a life-boat to them; and they have saved hundreds of thousands of men and of families from disastrous shipwreck. The existence of that free country and that free government has had a prodigious influence upon freedom in Europe and in England. If you could have before you a chart of the condition of Europe when the United States became a nation, and another chart of the condition of Europe now, you would see the difference, the enormous stride which has been made in Europe; and you may rely upon it that not a little of it has been occasioned by the influence of the great example of that country, free in its political institutions beyond all other countries, and yet maintaining its course in peace, preserving order, and conferring upon all its people a degree of prosperity which in these old countries is as yet unknown.

I should like now to speak specially to the working men who are here, who have no capital but their skill and their industry and their bodily strength. In fifteen years from 1845 to 1860—and this is a fact which I stated in this room

more than a year ago, when speaking on the question of America, but it is a fact which every working man ought to have in his mind always when he is considering what America is—in fifteen years there have emigrated to the United States from Great Britain and Ireland not less than two million four hundred thousand persons. Millions are easily spoken, not easily counted, with great difficulty comprehended; but the twenty-four hundred thousand persons that I have described means a population equal to not less than sixty towns, every one of them of the size and population of Rochdale. And every one of these men who have emigrated, as he crossed the Atlantic—if he went by steam, in a fortnight, and if he went by sails, in a month or five weeks—found himself in a country where to his senses a vast revolution had taken place, comprehending all that men anticipate from any kind of revolution that shall advance political and social equality in their own land—a revolution which commenced in the War of Independence, which has been going on, and which has been confirmed by all that has transpired in subsequent years.

He does not find that he belongs to what are called the 'lower classes;' he is not shut out from any of the rights of citizenship; he is admitted to the full enjoyment of all political privileges, as far as they are extended to any portion of the population; and he has there advantages which the people of this country have not yet gained, because we are but gradually making our way out of the darkness and the errors and the tyrannies of past ages. But in America he finds the land not cursed with feudalism; it is free to every man to buy and sell, and possess and transmit. He finds in the town in which he lives that the noblest buildings are the school-houses to which his children are freely admitted. And among those twenty millions—for I am now confining my observations to the Free States—the son of every man has easy admission to school, has fair opportunity for improvement; and, if God has gifted him with power of head and of

heart, there is nothing of usefulness, nothing of greatness, nothing of success in that country to which he may not fairly aspire.

And, Sir, this makes a difference between that country and this, on which I must say another word. One of the most painful things to my mind to be seen in England is this, that amongst the great body of those classes which earn their living by their daily labour—it is particularly observable in the agricultural districts, and it is too much to be observed even in our own districts—there is an absence of that hope which every man ought to have in his soul that there is for him, if he be industrious and frugal, a comfortable independence as he advances in life. In the United States that hope prevails everywhere, because everywhere there is an open career; there is no privileged class; there is complete education extended to all, and every man feels that he was not born to be in penury and in suffering, but that there is no point in the social ladder to which he may not fairly hope to raise himself by his honest efforts.

Well, looking at all this—and I have but touched on some very prominent facts—I should say that it offers to us every motive, not for fear, not for jealousy, not for hatred, but rather for admiration, gratitude, and friendship. I am persuaded of this as much as I am of anything that I know or believe, that the more perfect the friendship that is established between the people of England and the free people of America, the more you will find your path of progress here made easy for you, and the more will social and political liberty advance amongst us.

But this country which I have been in part describing is now the scene of one of the greatest calamities that can afflict mankind. After seventy years of almost uninterrupted peace, it has become the scene of a civil war, more gigantic, perhaps, than any that we have any record of with regard to any other nation or any other people; for the scene of this warfare is so

extended as to embrace a region almost equal in size to the whole of Europe. At this very moment military operations are being undertaken at points as distant from each other as Madrid is distant from Moscow. But this great strife cannot have arisen amongst an educated and intelligent people without some great and overruling cause. Let us for a moment examine that cause, and let us ask ourselves whether it is possible at such a time to stand neutral in regard to the contending parties, and to refuse our sympathy to one or the other of them. I find men sometimes who profess a strict neutrality; they wish neither the one thing nor the other. This arises either from the fact that they are profoundly ignorant with regard to this matter, or else that they sympathise with the South, but are rather ashamed to admit it.

There are two questions concerned in this struggle. Hitherto, generally, one only has been discussed. There is the question whether negro slavery shall continue to be upheld amongst Christian nations, or whether it shall be entirely abolished. Because, bear in mind that if the result of the struggle that is now proceeding in America should abolish slavery within the territories of the United States, then soon after slavery in Brazil, and slavery in Cuba, will also fall. I was speaking the other day to a gentleman well acquainted with Cuban affairs; he is often in the habit of seeing persons who come from Cuba to this country on business; and I asked him what his Cuban friends said of what was going on in America. He said, 'They speak of it with the greatest apprehension; all the property of Cuba,' he said, 'is based on slavery; and they say that if slavery comes to an end in America, as they believe it will, through this war, slavery will have a very short life in Cuba.' Therefore, the question which is being now tried is, not merely whether four millions of slaves in America shall be free, but whether the vast number of slaves (I know not the number) in Cuba and Brazil shall also be liberated.

But there is another question besides that of the negro, and which to you whom I am now addressing is scarcely less important. I say that the question of freedom to men of all races is deeply involved in this great strife in the United States. I said I wanted the working men of this audience to listen to my statement, because it is to them that I particularly wish to address myself. I say, that not only is the question of negro slavery concerned in this struggle, but, if we are to take the opinion of leading writers and men in the Southern States of America, the freedom of white men is not safe in their hands. Now, I will not trouble you with pages of extracts which would confirm all that I am about to say, but I shall read you two or three short ones which will explain exactly what I mean.

The city of Richmond, as you know, is the capital of what is called the Southern Confederacy. In that city a newspaper is published, called the *Richmond Examiner*, which is one of the most able, and perhaps about the most influential, paper published in the Slave States. Listen to what the *Richmond Examiner* says:—

'The experiment of universal liberty has failed. The evils of free society are insufferable. Free society in the long run is impracticable, it is everywhere starving, demoralizing, and insurrectionary. Policy and humanity alike forbid the extension of its evils to new peoples and to coming generations; and therefore free society must fall and give way to a slave society—a social system old as the world, universal as man.'

Well, on another occasion, the same paper treats the subject in this way. The writer says:—

'Hitherto the defence of slavery has encountered great difficulties, because its apologists stopped half way. They confined the defence of slavery to negro slavery alone, abandoning the principle of slavery, and admitting that every other form of slavery was wrong. Now the line of defence is changed. The South maintains that slavery is just, natural, and necessary, and that it does not depend on the difference of complexions.'

But following up this is an extract from a speech by a Mr. Cobb, who is an eminent man in Southern politics and in Southern opinion. He says:—

'There is, perhaps no solution of the great problem of reconciling the interests of labour and capital, so as to protect each from the encroachments and oppressions of the other, so simple and effective as negro slavery By making the labourer himself capital, the conflict ceases, and the interests become identical.'

Now, I do not know whether there is any working man here who does not fully or partly realize the meaning of those extracts. They mean this, that if a man in this neighbourhood (for they pity us very much in our benighted condition as regards capital and labour, and they have an admirable way, from their view, of putting an end to strikes)—they say that, if a man in this neighbourhood had ten thousand pounds sterling in a cotton or woollen factory, and he employed a hundred men, women, and children, that instead of paying them whatever wages had been agreed upon, allowing them to go to the other side of the town, and work where they liked, or to move to another county, or to emigrate to America, or to have any kind of will or wish whatever with regard to their own disposal, that they should be to him capital, just the same as the horses are in his stable; that he should sell the husband South,—'South' in America means something very dreadful to the negro,—that they should sell the wife if they liked, that they should sell the children, that, in point of fact, they should do whatsoever they liked with them, and that, if any one of them resisted any punishment which the master chose to inflict, the master should be held justified if he beat his slave to death; and that not one of those men should have the power to give evidence in any court of justice, in any case, against a white man, however much he might have suffered from that white man.

You will observe that this most important paper in the South writes for that principle, and this eminent Southern politician indorses it, and thinks it a cure for all the evils which exist in the Old World and in the Northern and Free States; and there is not a paper in the South, nor is there a

man as eminent or more eminent than Mr. Cobb, who has dared to write or speak in condemnation of the atrocity of that language. I believe this great strife to have had its origin in an infamous conspiracy against the rights of human nature. Those principles, which they distinctly avow and proclaim, are not to be found, as far as I know, in the pages of any heathen writer of old times, nor are they to be discovered in the teachings or the practice of savage nations in our times. It is the doctrine of devils, and not of men; and all mankind should shudder at the enormity of the guilt which the leaders of this conspiracy have brought upon that country.

Now, let us look at two or three facts, which seem to me very remarkable, on the surface of the case, but which there are men in this country, and I am told they may be found even in this town, who altogether ignore and deny. The war was not commenced by those to whom your resolution refers; it was commenced by the South; they rebelled against the majority. It was not a rebellion against a monarchy, or an aristocracy, or some other form of government which has its hold upon people, sometimes by services, but often from tradition; but it was against a Government of their own, and a compact of their own, that they violently rebelled, and for the expressed and avowed purpose of maintaining the institution of slavery, and for the purpose, not disavowed, of re-opening the slave trade, and, as these extracts show, if their principles should be fully carried out, of making bondage universal among all classes of labourers and artisans. When I say that their object was to re-open the slave trade, do not for a moment imagine that I am overstating the case against them. They argue, with a perfect logic, that, if slavery was right, the slave trade could not be wrong; if the slave trade be wrong, slavery cannot be right; and that if it be lawful and moral to go to the State of Virginia and buy a slave for two thousand dollars, and take him to Louisiana, it cannot

be wrong to go to Africa, and buy a slave for fifty dollars, and take him to Louisiana. That was their argument; it is an argument to this day, and is an argument that in my opinion no man can controvert; and the lawful existence of slavery is as a matter of course to be followed, and would be followed, wherever there was the power, by the re-opening of the traffic in negroes from Africa.

That is not all these people have done. Reference has been made, in the resolution and in the speeches, to the distress which prevails in this district, and you are told, and have been told over and over again, that all this distress has arisen from the blockade of the ports of the Southern States. There is at least one great port from which in past times two millions of bales of cotton a-year have found their way to Europe —the port of New Orleans—which is blockaded; and the United States Government has proclaimed that any cotton that is sent from the interior to New Orleans for shipment, although it belongs to persons in arms against the Government, shall yet be permitted to go to Europe, and they shall receive unmolested the proceeds of the sale of that cotton. But still the cotton does not come. The reason why it does not come is, not because it would do harm to the United States Government for it to come, or that it would in any way assist the United States Government in carrying on the war. The reason that it does not come is, because its being kept back is supposed to be a way of influencing public opinion in England and the course of the English Government in reference to the American war. They burn the cotton that they may injure us, and they injure us because they think that we cannot live even for a year without their cotton; and that to get it we should send ships of war, break the blockade, make war upon the North, and assist the slave-owners to maintain, or to obtain, their independence.

Now, with regard to the question of American cotton, one or two extracts will be sufficient; but I could give you a

whole pamphlet of them, if it were necessary. Mr. Mann, an eminent person in the State of Georgia, says:—

'With the failure of the cotton, England fails. Stop her supply of Southern slave-grown cotton, and her factories stop, her commerce stops, the healthful normal circulation of her life-blood stops.'

Again he says:—

'In one year from the stoppage of England's supply of Southern slave-grown cotton, the Chartists would be in all her streets and fields, revolution would be rampant throughout the island, and nothing that is would exist.'

He also says, addressing an audience:—

'Why, Sirs, British lords hold their lands, British bishops hold their revenues, Victoria holds her sceptre, by the grace of cotton, as surely as by the grace of God.'

Senator Wigfall says:—

'If we stop the supply of cotton for one week, England would be starving. Queen Victoria's crown would not stand on her head one week, if the supply of cotton was stopped, nor would her head stand on her shoulders.'

Mr. Stephens, who is the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, says:—

'There will be revolution in Europe, there will be starvation there; our cotton is the element that will do it.'

Now, I am not stating the mere result of any discovery of my own, but it would be impossible to read the papers of the South, or the speeches made in the South, before, and at the time of, and after the secession, without seeing that the universal opinion there was, that the stoppage of the supply of cotton would be our instantaneous ruin, and that if they could only lay hold of it, keep it back in the country, or burn it, so that it never could be used, that then the people of Lancashire, merchants, manufacturers, and operatives in mills—everybody dependent upon this vast industry—would immediately arise and protest against the English Government abstaining for one moment from the recognition of the South, from war with the North, and from a resolution to do the

utmost that we could to create a slave-holding independent republic in the South.

And these very men who have been wishing to drag us into a war that would have covered us with everlasting infamy, have sent their envoys to this country, Mr. Yancey, Mr. Mann (I do not know whether or not the same Mr. Mann to whom I have been referring), and Mr. Mason, the author of the Fugitive Slave Law. These men have been in this country,—one of them I believe is here now,—envoys sent to offer friendship to the Queen of England, to be received at her Court, and to make friends with the great men in London. They come,—I have seen them under the gallery of the House of Commons; I have seen Members of the House shaking hands with them and congratulating them, if there has been some military success on their side, and receiving them as if they were here from the most honourable Government, and with the most honourable mission. Why, the thing which they have broken off from the United States to maintain, is felony by your law. They are not only slave owners, slave buyers and sellers, but that which out of Pandemonium itself was never before conceived,—they are slave breeders for the slave market; and these men have come to your country, and are to be met with at elegant tables in London, and are in fast friendship with some of your public men, and are constantly found in some of your newspaper offices; and they are here to ask Englishmen—Englishmen with a history of freedom—to join hands with their atrocious conspiracy

I regret more than I have words to express this painful fact, that of all the countries in Europe this country is the only one which has men in it who are willing to take active steps in favour of this intended slave government. We supply the ships; we supply the arms, the munitions of war; we give aid and comfort to this foulest of all crimes. Englishmen only do it. I believe you have not seen a single statement

in the newspapers that any French, or Belgian, or Dutch, or Russian ship has been engaged in, or seized whilst attempting to violate the blockade and to carry arms to the South. They are English Liberal newspapers only which support this stupendous iniquity. They are English statesmen only, who profess to be liberal, who have said a word to favour the authors of this now-enacting revolution in America.

The other day, not a week since, a member of the present Government,—he is not a statesman—he is the son of a great statesman, and occupies the position of Secretary for Ireland,—he dared to say to an English audience that he wished the Republic to be divided, and that the South should become an independent State. If that island which—I suppose in punishment for some of its offences—has been committed to his care,—if that island were to attempt to secede, not to set up a slave kingdom, but a kingdom more free than it has ever yet been, the Government of which he is a member would sack its cities and drench its soil with blood before they would allow such a kingdom to be established.

But the working men of England, and I will say it too for the great body of the middle classes of England, have not been wrong upon this great question. As for you,—men labouring from morn till night that you may honourably and honestly maintain your families, and the independence of your households,—you are too slowly emerging from a condition of things far from independent—far from free—for you to have sympathy with this fearful crime which I have been describing. You come, as it were, from bonds yourselves, and you can sympathize with them who are still in bondage.

See that meeting that was held in Manchester a month ago, in the Free Trade Hall, of five or six thousand men. See the address which they there carried unanimously to the President of the United States. See that meeting held the other night in Exeter Hall, in London; that vast room, the greatest room, I suppose, in the Metropolis, filled

so much that its overflowings filled another large room in the same building, and when that was full, the further overflowings filled the street; and in both rooms, and in the street, speeches were made on this great question. But what is said by the writers in this infamous Southern press in this country with regard to that meeting? Who was there? 'A gentleman who had written a novel, and two or three Dissenting ministers.' I shall not attempt any defence of those gentlemen. What they do, they do openly, in the face of day; and if they utter sentiments on this question, it is from a public platform, with thousands of their countrymen gazing into their faces. These men who slander them write behind a mask,—and, what is more, they dare not tell in the open day that which they write in the columns of their journal. But if it be true that there is nothing in the writer of a successful novel, or in two or three pious and noble-minded Dissenting ministers, to collect a great audience, what does it prove if there was a great audience? It only proves that they were not collected by the reputation of any orator who was expected to address them, but by their cordial and ardent sympathy for the great cause which was pleaded before them.

Everybody now that I meet says to me, 'Public opinion seems to have undergone a considerable change.' The fact is, people do not know very much about America. They are learning more every day. They have been greatly misled by what are called 'the best public instructors.' Jefferson, who was one of the greatest men that the United States have produced, said that newspapers should be divided into four compartments: in one of them they should print the true; in the next, the probable; in the third, the possible; and in the fourth, the lies. With regard to some of these newspapers, I incline to think, as far as their leading columns go, that an equal division of space would be found very inconvenient, and that the last-named compartment, when dealing with

American questions, would have to be at least four times as large as the first.

Coming back to the question of this war: I admit, of course—everybody must admit—that we are not responsible for it, for its commencement, or for the manner in which it is conducted; nor can we be responsible for its result. But there is one thing which we are responsible for, and that is for our sympathies, for the manner in which we regard it, and for the tone in which we discuss it. What shall we say, then, with regard to it? On which side shall we stand? I do not believe it is possible to be strictly, coldly neutral. The question at issue is too great, the contest is too grand in the eye of the world. It is impossible for any man, who can have an opinion worth anything on any question, not to have some kind of an opinion on the question of this war. I am not ashamed of my opinion, or of the sympathy which I feel, and have over and over again expressed, on the side of the free North. I cannot understand how any man witnessing what is enacting on the American continent can indulge in small cavils against the free people of the North, and close his eye entirely to the enormity of the purposes of the South. I cannot understand how any Englishman, who in past years has been accustomed to say that 'there was one foul blot upon the fair fame of the American Republic,' can now express any sympathy for those who would perpetuate and extend that blot. And, more, if we profess to be, though it be with imperfect and faltering steps, the followers of Him who declared it to be His Divine mission 'to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,' must we not reject with indignation and scorn the proffered alliance and friendship with a power based on human bondage, and which contemplates the overthrow and the extinction of the dearest rights of the most helpless of mankind?

If we are the friends of freedom, personal and political,—

and we all profess to be so, and most of us, more or less, are striving after it more completely for our own country,—how can we withhold our sympathy from a Government and a people amongst whom white men have always been free, and who are now offering an equal freedom to the black? I advise you not to believe in the 'destruction' of the American nation. If facts should happen by any chance to force you to believe it, do not commit the crime of wishing it. I do not blame men who draw different conclusions from mine from the facts, and who believe that the restoration of the Union is impossible. As the facts lie before our senses, so must we form a judgment on them. But I blame those men that wish for such a catastrophe. For myself, I have never despaired, and I will not despair. In the language of one of our old poets, who wrote, I think, more than three hundred years ago, I will not despair,—

> 'For I have seen a ship in haven fall,
> After the storm had broke both mast and shroud.'

From the very outburst of this great convulsion, I have had but one hope and one faith, and it is this—that the result of this stupendous strife may be to make freedom the heritage for ever of a whole continent, and that the grandeur and the prosperity of the American Union may never be impaired.

# AMERICA.

## IV.

### THE STRUGGLE IN AMERICA.

### ST. JAMES'S HALL, MARCH 26, 1863.

[The meeting at which this speech was delivered was convened by the Trades' Unions of London to enable the working men to express their sentiments on the war in the United States. Mr. Bright was Chairman of the meeting.]

When the Committee did me the honour to ask me to attend this meeting to-night and to take the Chair, I felt that I was not at liberty to refuse, for I considered that there was something remarkable in the character of this meeting; and I need not tell you that the cause which we are assembled to discuss is one which excites my warmest sympathies. This meeting is remarkable, inasmuch as it is not what is commonly called a public meeting, but it is a meeting, as you have seen from the announcements and advertisements by which it has been called—it is a meeting of members of Trades' Unions and Trades' Societies in London. The members of these Societies have not usually stepped out from their ordinary business to take part in meetings of this kind on public questions.

The subject which we have met to discuss is one of surpassing interest—which excites at this moment, and has excited for two years past, the attention and the astonishment of the

civilized world. We see a country which for many years—during the lifetime of the oldest amongst us—has been the most peaceful, and prosperous, and the most free amongst the great nations of the earth—we see it plunged at once into the midst of a sanguinary revolution, whose proportions are so gigantic as to dwarf all other revolutionary records and events of which we have any knowledge. But I do not wonder at this revolution. No man can read the history of the United States from the time when they ceased to be dependent colonies of England, without discovering that at the birth of that great Republic there was sown the seed, if not of its dissolution, at least of its extreme peril; and the infant giant in its cradle may be said to have been rocked under the shadow of the cypress, which is the symbol of mortality and of the tomb.

Colonial weakness, when face to face with British strength, made it impossible to put an end to slavery, or to establish a republic free from slavery. To meet England, it was necessary to be united, and to be united it was necessary to tolerate slavery; and from that hour to this—at least, to a period within the last two or three years—the love of the Union and the patriotism of the American people have induced them constantly to make concessions to slavery, because they knew that when they ceased to make concessions they ran the peril of that disruption which has now arrived; and they dreaded the destruction of their country even more than they hated the evil of slavery. But these concessions failed, as I believe concessions to evil always do fail. These concessions failed to secure safety in that Union. There were principles at war which were wholly irreconcilable. The South, as you know, has been engaged for fifty years in building fresh ramparts by which it may defend its institutions. The North has been growing yearly greater in freedom; and though the conflict might be postponed, it was obviously inevitable.

In our day, then, that which the statesmen of America have

hoped permanently to postpone has arrived. The great trial is now going on in the sight of the world, and the verdict upon this great question must at last be rendered. But how much is at stake? Some men of this country, some writers, treat it as if, after all, it was no great matter that had caused this contest in the United States. I say that a whole continent is at stake. It is not a question of boundary; it is not a question of tariff; it is not a question of supremacy of party, or even of the condition of four millions of negroes. It is more than that. It is a question of a whole continent, with its teeming millions, and what shall be their present and their future fate. It is for these millions freedom or slavery, education or ignorance, light or darkness, Christian morality ever widening and all-blessing in its influence, or an overshadowing and all-blasting guilt.

There are men, good men, who say that we in England, who are opposed to war, should take no public part in this great question. Only yesterday I received from a friend of mine, whose fidelity I honour, a letter, in which he asked me whether I thought, with the views which he supposed I entertain on the question of war, it was fitting that I should appear at such a meeting as this. It is not our war; we did not make it. We deeply lament it. It is not in our power to bring it to a close; but I know not that we are called upon to shut our eyes and to close our hearts to the great issues which are depending upon it. Now we are met here, let us ask each other some questions. Has England any opinion with regard to this American question? Has England any sympathy, on one side or the other, with either party in this great struggle? But, to come nearer, I would ask whether this meeting has any opinion upon it, and whether our sympathies have been stirred in relation to it? It is true, to this meeting not many rich, not many noble, have been called. It is a meeting composed of artisans and working men of the city of London,—men whose labour, in combination with

capital and directing skill, has built this great city, and has made England great. I address myself to these men. I ask them—I ask you—have you any special interest in this contest?

Privilege thinks it has a great interest in it, and every morning, with blatant voice, it comes into your streets and curses the American Republic. Privilege has beheld an afflicting spectacle for many years past. It has beheld thirty millions of men, happy and prosperous, without emperor, without king, without the surroundings of a court, without nobles, except such as are made by eminence in intellect and virtue, without State bishops and State priests,—

'Sole vendors of the lore which works salvation,'—

without great armies and great navies, without great debt and without great taxes. Privilege has shuddered at what might happen to old Europe if this grand experiment should succeed. But you, the workers,—you, striving after a better time,—you, struggling upwards towards the light, with slow and painful steps,—you have no cause to look with jealousy upon a country which, amongst all the great nations of the globe, is that one where labour has met with the highest honour, and where it has reaped its greatest reward. Are you aware of the fact, that in fifteen years, which is but as yesterday when it is past, two and a half millions of your countrymen have found a home in the United States,—that a population equal nearly, if not quite, to the population of this great city—itself equal to no mean kingdom—has emigrated from these shores? In the United States there has been, as you know, an open door for every man,—and millions have entered into it, and have found rest.

Now, take the two sections of the country which are engaged in this fearful struggle. In the one, labour is honoured more than elsewhere in the world; there, more than in any other country, men rise to competence and indepen-

dence; a career is open; the pursuit of happiness is not hopelessly thwarted by the law. In the other section of that country, labour is not only not honoured, but it is degraded. The labourer is made a chattel. He is no more his own than the horse that drags a carriage through the next street; nor is his wife, nor is his child, nor is anything that is his, his own. And if you have not heard the astounding statement, it may be as well for a moment to refer to it,—that it is not black men only who should be slaves. Only to-day I read from one of the Southern papers a statement that—

'Slavery in the Jewish times was not the slavery of negroes; and therefore, if you confine slavery to negroes, you lose your sheet anchor, which is the Bible-argument in favour of slavery.'

I think nothing can be more fitting for the discussion of the members of the Trade Societies of London. You in your Trade Societies help each other when you are sick, or if you meet with accidents. You do many kind acts amongst each other. You have other business also; you have to maintain what you believe to be the just rights of industry and of your separate trades; and sometimes, as you know, you do things which many people do not approve, and which, probably, when you come to think more coolly of them, you may even doubt the wisdom of yourselves. That is only saying that you are not immaculate, and that your wisdom, like the wisdom of other classes, is not absolutely perfect. But they have in the Southern States a specific for all the differences between capital and labour. They say,—

'Make the labourer capital: the free system in Europe is a rotten system; let us get rid of that, and make all the labourers as much capital and as much the property of the capitalist and employer as the capitalist's cattle and horses are property, and then the whole system will move with that perfect ease and harmony which the world admires so much in the Southern States of America.'

I believe there never was a question submitted to the public opinion of the world which it was more becoming the working

men and members of Trades' Unions and Trade Societies of every kind in this country fully to consider, than this great question.

But there may be some in this room, and there are some who say to me, 'But what is to become of our trade, what is to become of the capitalist and the labourer of Lancashire?' I am not sure that much of the capital of Lancashire will not be ruined. I am not sure that very large numbers of its population will not have to remove to seek other employment, either in this or some other country. I am not one of those who underrate this great calamity. On the contrary, I have scarcely met with any man,—not more than half a dozen,—since this distress in our county began, who has been willing to measure the magnitude of this calamity according to the scale with which I have viewed it.

But let us examine this question. The distress of Lancashire comes from a failure of the supply of cotton. The failure of the supply of cotton comes from the war in the United States. The war in the United States has originated in the effort of the slaveholders of that country to break up what they themselves admit to be the freest and best government that ever existed, for the sole purpose of making perpetual the institution of slavery. But if the South began the war, and created all the mischief, does it look reasonable that we should pat them on the back, and be their friends? If they have destroyed cotton, or withheld it, shall we therefore take them to our bosoms?

I have a letter written by an agent in the city of Nashville, who had been accustomed to buy cotton there before the war, and who returned there immediately after that city came into the possession of the Northern forces. He began his trade, and cotton came in. Not Union planters only, but Secession planters, began to bring in the produce of their plantations, and he had a fair chance of re-establishing his business; but the moment this was discovered by the commanders of

the Southern forces at some distance from the city, they issued the most peremptory orders that every boat-load of cotton on the rivers, every waggon-load upon the roads, and every car-load upon the railroads, that was leaving any plantations for the purposes of sale, should be immediately destroyed. The result was, that the cotton trade was at once again put an end to, and I believe only to a very small extent has it been reopened, even to this hour.

Then take the State of New Orleans, which, as you know, has been now for many months in the possession of the Northern forces. The Northern commanders there had issued announcements that any cotton sent down to New Orleans for exportation, even though it came from the most resolved friends of secession in the district, should still be safe. It might be purchased to ship to Europe, and the proceeds of that cotton might be returned, and the trade be re-opened. But you have not found cotton come down to New Orleans, although its coming there under those terms would be of no particular advantage to the North. It has been withheld with this single object, to create in the manufacturing districts of France and England a state of suffering that might at last become unbearable, and thus might compel the Governments of those countries, in spite of all that international law may teach, in spite of all that morality may enjoin upon them, to take sides with the South, and go to war with the North for the sake of liberating whatever cotton there is now in the plantations of the Secession States.

At this moment, such of you as read the City articles of the daily papers will see that a loan has been contracted for in the City, to the amount of three millions sterling, on behalf of the Southern Confederacy. It is not brought into the market by any firm with an English name; but I am sorry to be obliged to believe that many Englishmen have taken portions of that loan. Now the one great object of that loan is this, to pay in this country for vessels which are being built—

*Alabamas*—from which it is hoped that so much irritation will arise in the minds of the people of the Northern States, that England may be dragged into war to take sides with the South and with slavery. The South was naturally hostile to England, because England was hostile to slavery. Now the great hope of the insurrection has been from the beginning, that Englishmen would not have fortitude to bear the calamities which it has brought upon us; but by some trick or by some accident we might be brought into a war with the North, and thereby give strength to the South.

I should hope that this question is now so plain that most Englishmen must understand it; and least of all do I expect that the six millions of men in the United Kingdom who are not enfranchised can have any doubt upon it. Their instincts are always right in the main, and if they get the facts and information, I can rely on their influence being thrown into the right scale. I wish I could state what would be as satisfactory to myself with regard to some others. There may be men outside, there are men sitting amongst your legislators, who will build and equip corsair ships to prey upon the commerce of a friendly power,—who will disregard the laws and the honour of their country,—who will trample on the Proclamation of their sovereign,—and who, for the sake of the glittering profit which sometimes waits on crime, are content to cover themselves with everlasting infamy. There may be men, too—rich men—in this city of London, who will buy in the slave-owners' loan, and who, for the chance of more gain than honest dealing will afford them, will help a conspiracy whose fundamental institution, whose corner-stone, is declared to be felony, and infamous by the statutes of their country.

I speak not to these men—I leave them to their conscience in that hour which comes to all of us, when conscience speaks and the soul is no longer deaf to her voice. I speak rather to you, the working men of London, the representatives, as you are here to-night, of the feelings and the interests of the

millions who cannot hear my voice. I wish you to be true to yourselves. Dynasties may fall, aristocracies may perish, privilege will vanish into the dim past; but you, your children, and your children's children, will remain, and from you the English people will be continued to succeeding generations.

You wish the freedom of your country. You wish it for yourselves. You strive for it in many ways. Do not then give the hand of fellowship to the worst foes of freedom that the world has ever seen, and do not, I beseech you, bring down a curse upon your cause which no after-penitence can ever lift from it. You will not do this. I have faith in you. Impartial history will tell that, when your statesmen were hostile or coldly neutral, when many of your rich men were corrupt, when your press—which ought to have instructed and defended—was mainly written to betray, the fate of a continent and of its vast population being in peril, you clung to freedom with an unfaltering trust that God in His infinite mercy will yet make it the heritage of all His children.

# AMERICA.

## V.

### LONDON, JUNE 16, 1863.

[On June 16, 1863, a public meeting was held at the London Tavern, at the instance of the Union and Emancipation Society, in order to hear an address from Mr. M. D. Conway, of Eastern Virginia. Mr. Bright was in the Chair.]

If we look back a little over two years—two years and a half—when the question of secession was first raised in a practical shape, I think we shall be able to remember that, when the news first arrived in England, there was but one opinion with regard to it—that every man condemned the folly and the wickedness of the South, and protested against their plea that they had any grievance which justified them in revolt—and every man hoped that some mode might be discovered by which the terrible calamity of war might be avoided.

For a time, many thought that there would be no war. Whilst the reins were slipping from the hands—the too feeble hands—of Mr. Buchanan into the grasp of President Lincoln, there was a moment when men thought that we were about to see the wonderful example of a great question, which in all other countries would have involved a war, settled perhaps by moderation—some moderation on one

side, and some concession on the other; and so long as men believed that there would be no war, so long everybody condemned the South. We were afraid of a war in America, because we knew that one of the great industries of our country depended upon the continuous reception of its raw material from the Southern States. But it was a folly—it was a gross absurdity—for any man to believe, with the history of the world before him, that the people of the Northern States, twenty millions, with their free Government, would for one moment sit down satisfied with the dismemberment of their country, and make no answer to the war which had been commenced by the South.

I speak not in justification of war. I am only treating this question upon principles which are almost universally acknowledged throughout the world, and by an overwhelming majority even of those men who accept the Christian religion; and it is only upon those principles, so almost universally acknowledged, and acknowledged as much in this country as anywhere else—it is only just that we should judge the United States upon those principles upon which we in this country would be likely to act.

But the North did not yield to the dismemberment of their country, and they did not allow a conspiracy of Southern politicians and slaveholders to seize their forts and arsenals without preparing for resistance. Then, when the people of England found that the North were about to resist, and that war was inevitable, they turned their eyes from the South, which was the beginner of the war, and looked to the North, saying that, if the North would not resist, there could be no war, and that we should get our cotton, and trade would go on as before; and therefore, from that hour to this, not a few persons in this country, who at first condemned the South, have been incessant in their condemnation of the North.

Now, I believe this is a fair statement of the feeling which prevailed when the first news of secession arrived, and of

the change of opinion which took place in a few weeks, when it was found that, by the resolution of the North to maintain the integrity of their country, war, and civil war, was unavoidable. The trade interests of the country affected our opinion; and I fear did then prevent, and have since prevented, our doing justice to the people of the North.

Now I am going to transport you, in mind, to Lancashire, and the interests of Lancashire, which, after all, are the interests of the whole United Kingdom, and clearly of not a few in this metropolis. What was the condition of our greatest manufacturing industry before the war, and before secession had been practically attempted? It was this: that almost ninety per cent. of all our cotton came from the Southern States of the American Union, and was, at least nine-tenths of it, the produce of the uncompensated labour of the negro.

Everybody knew that we were carrying on a prodigious industry upon a most insecure foundation; and it was the commonest thing in the world for men who were discussing the present and the future of the cotton trade, whether in Parliament or out of it, to point to the existence of slavery in the United States of America as the one dangerous thing in connection with that great trade; and it was one of the reasons which stimulated me on several occasions to urge upon the Government of this country to improve the Government of India, and to give us a chance of receiving a considerable portion of our supply from India, so that we might not be left in absolute want when the calamity occurred, which all thoughtful men knew must some day come, in the United States.

Now, I maintain that with a supply of cotton mainly derived from the Southern States, and raised by slave labour, two things are indisputable: first, that the supply must always be insufficient; and second, that it must always be insecure. Perhaps many of you are not aware that in the United States—I am speaking of the Slave States, and the

cotton-growing States—the quantity of land which is cultivated for cotton is a mere garden, a mere plot, in comparison with the whole of the cotton region. I speak from the authority of a report lately presented to the Boston Chamber of Commerce, containing much important information on this question; and I believe that the whole acreage, or the whole breadth of the land on which cotton is grown in America, does not exceed ten thousand square miles—that is, a space one hundred miles long and one hundred miles broad, or the size of two of our largest counties in England; but the land of the ten chief cotton-producing States is sixty times as much as that, being, I believe, about twelve times the size of England and Wales.

It cannot be, therefore, because there has not been land enough that we have not in former years had cotton enough; it cannot be that there has not been a demand for the produce of the land, for the demand has constantly outstripped the supply; it has not been because the price has not been sufficient, for, as is well known, the price has been much higher of late years, and the profit to the planter much greater; and yet, notwithstanding the land and the demand, and the price and the profit, the supply of cotton has not been sufficient for the wants of the spinners and the manufacturers of the world, and for the wants of civilization.

The particular facts with regard to this I need not, perhaps, enter into; but I find, if I compare the prices of cotton in Liverpool from 1856 to 1860 with the prices from 1841 to 1845, that every pound of cotton brought from America and sold in Liverpool fetched in the last five years more than twenty per cent. in excess of what it did in the former five years, notwithstanding that we were every year in greater difficulties through finding our supply of cotton insufficient.

But what was the reason that we did not get enough? It was because there was not labour enough in the Southern States. You see every day in the newspapers that there are

four millions of slaves, but of those four millions of slaves some are growing tobacco, some rice, and some sugar; a very large number are employed in domestic servitude, and a large number in factories, mechanical operations, and business in towns; and there remain only about one million negroes, or only one-quarter of the whole number, who are regularly engaged in the cultivation of cotton.

Now, you will see that the production of cotton and its continued increase must depend upon the constantly increasing productiveness of the labour of those one million negroes, and on the natural increase of population from them. Well, the increase of the population of the slaves in the United States is rather less than two and a-half per cent. per annum, and the increase on the million will be about twenty-five thousand a-year; and the increased production of cotton from that increased amount of labour consisting of twenty-five thousand more negroes every year will probably never exceed—I believe it has not reached—one hundred and fifty thousand bales per annum. The exact facts with regard to this are these: that in the ten years from 1841 to 1850 the average crop was 2,173,000 bales, and in the ten years from 1851 to 1860 it was 3,252,000, being an increase of 1,079,000 bales in the ten years, or only about 100,000 bales of increase per annum.

I have shown that the increase of production must depend upon the increase of labour, because every other element is in abundance—soil, climate, and so forth. (A Voice: 'How about sugar?') A Gentleman asks about sugar. If in any particular year there was an extravagant profit upon cotton, there might be, and there probably would be, some abstraction of labour from the cultivation of tobacco, and rice, and sugar, in order to apply it to cotton, and a larger temporary increase of growth might take place; but I have given you the facts with regard to the last twenty years, and I think you will see that my statement is correct.

Now, can this be remedied under slavery? I will show you how it cannot. And first of all, everybody who is acquainted with American affairs knows that there is not very much migration of the population of the Northern States into the Southern States to engage in the ordinary occupations of agricultural labour. Labour is not honourable and is not honoured in the South, and therefore free labourers from the North are not likely to go South. Again, of all the emigration from this country amounting as it did, in the fifteen years from 1846 to 1860, to two millions five hundred thousand persons, being equal to the whole of the population of this great city—a mere trifle went South and settled there to pursue the occupation of agriculture; they remained in the North, where labour is honourable and honoured.

Whence, then, could the planters of the South receive their increasing labour? Only from the slave-ship and the coast of Africa. But, fortunately for the world, the United States Government has never yet become so prostrate under the heel of the slave-owner as to consent to the reopening of the slave-trade. Therefore the Southern planter was in this unfortunate position: he could not tempt, perhaps he did not want, free labourers from the North; he could not tempt, perhaps he did not want, free labourers from Europe; and if he did want, he was not permitted to fetch slave labour from Africa. Well, that being so, we arrive at this conclusion—that whilst the cultivation of cotton was performed by slave labour, you were shut up for your hope of increased growth to the small increase that was possible with the increase of two and a half per cent. per annum in the population of the slaves, about one million in number, that have been regularly employed in the cultivation of cotton.

Then, if the growth was thus insufficient—and I as one connected with the trade can speak very clearly upon that point—I ask you whether the production and the supply were not necessarily insecure by reason of the institution of slavery?

It was perilous within the Union. In this country we made one mistake in our forecast of this question: we did not believe that the South would commit suicide; we thought it possible that the slaves might revolt. They might revolt, but their subjugation was inevitable, because the whole power of the Union was pledged to the maintenance of order in every part of its dominions.

But if there be men who think that the cotton trade would be safer if the South were an independent State, with slavery established there in permanence, they greatly mistake; because, whatever was the danger of revolt in the Southern States whilst the Union was complete, the possibility of revolt and the possibility of success would surely be greatly increased if the North were separate from the South, and the negro had only his Southern master, and not the Northern power, to contend against.

But I believe there is little danger of revolt, and no possibility of success. When the revolt took place in the island of St. Domingo, the blacks were far superior in numbers to the whites. In the Southern States it is not so. Ignorant, degraded, without organization, without arms, and scarcely with any faint hope of freedom for ever, except the enthusiastic hope which they have when they believe that God will some day stretch out His arm for their deliverance—I say that under these circumstances, to my mind, there was no reasonable expectation of revolt, and that they had no expectation whatever of success in any attempt to gain their liberty by force of arms.

But now we are in a different position. Slavery itself has chosen its own issue, and has chosen its own field. Slavery—and when I say slavery, I mean the slave power—has not trusted to the future; but it has rushed into the battle-field to settle this great question; and having chosen war, it is from day to day sinking to inevitable ruin under it. Now, if we are agreed—and I am keeping you still to Lancashire and

to its interests for a moment longer—that this vast industry with all its interests of capital and labour has been standing on a menacing volcano, is it not possible that hereafter it may be placed upon a rock which nothing can disturb?

Imagine—what of course some people will say I have no right to imagine—imagine the war over, the Union restored and slavery abolished—does any man suppose that there would afterwards be in the South one single negro fewer than there are at present? On the contrary, I believe there would be more. I believe there is many a negro in the Northern States, and even in Canada, who, if the lash, and the chain, and the branding-iron, and the despotism against which even he dared not complain, were abolished for ever, would turn his face to the sunny lands of the South, and would find himself happier and more useful there than he can be in a more Northern clime.

More than this, there would be a migration from the North to the South. You do not suppose that those beautiful States, those regions than which earth offers nothing to man more fertile and more lovely, are shunned by the enterprising population of the North because they like the rigours of a Northern winter and the greater changeableness of the Northern seasons? Once abolish slavery in the South, and the whole of the country will be open to the enterprise and to the industry of all. And more than that, when you find that, only the other day, not fewer than four thousand emigrants, most of them from the United Kingdom, landed in one day in the city of New York, do you suppose that all those men would go north and west at once? Would not some of them turn their faces southwards, and seek the clime of the sun, which is so grateful to all men; where they would find a soil more fertile, rivers more abundant, and everything that Nature offers more profusely given, but from which they are now shut out by the accursed power which slavery exerts? With freedom you would have a gradual filling up of the

wildernesses of the Southern States; you would have there, not population only, but capital, and industry, and roads, and schools, and everything which tends to produce growth, and wealth, and prosperity.

I maintain—and I believe my opinion will be supported by all those men who are most conversant with American affairs—that, with slavery abolished, with freedom firmly established in the South, you would find in ten years to come a rapid increase in the growth of cotton; and not only would its growth be rapid, but its permanent increase would be secured.

I said that I was interested in this great question of cotton. I come from the midst of the great cotton industry of Lancashire; much the largest portion of anything I have in the world depends upon it; not a little of it is now utterly valueless, during the continuance of this war. My neighbours, by thousands and scores of thousands, are suffering, more or less, as I am suffering; and many of them, as you know—more than a quarter of a million of them—have been driven from a subsistence gained by their honourable labour to the extremest poverty, and to a dependence upon the charity of their fellow-countrymen. My interest is the interest of all the population.

My interest is against a mere enthusiasm, a mere sentiment, a mere visionary fancy of freedom as against slavery. I am speaking now as a matter of business. I am glad when matters of business go straight with matters of high sentiment and morality, and from this platform I declare my solemn conviction that there is no greater enemy to Lancashire, to its capital and to its labour, than the man who wishes the cotton agriculture of the Southern States to be continued under the conditions of slave labour.

One word more upon another branch of the question, and I have done. I would turn for a moment from commerce to politics. I believe that our true commercial interests in

this country are very much in harmony with what I think ought to be our true political sympathies. There is no people in the world, I think, that more fully and entirely accepts the theory that one nation acts very much upon the character and upon the career of another, than England; for our newspapers and our statesmen, our writers and our speakers of every class, are constantly telling us of the wonderful influence which English constitutional government and English freedom have on the position and career of every nation in Europe. I am not about to deny that some such influence, and occasionally, I believe, a beneficent influence, is thus exerted; but if we exert any influence upon Europe—and we pride ourselves upon it—perhaps it will not be a humiliation to admit that we feel some influence exerted upon us by the great American Republic. American freedom acts upon England, and there is nothing that is better known, at the west end of this great city—from which I have just come—than the influence that has been, and nothing more feared than the influence that may be, exerted by the United States upon this country.

We all of us know that there has been a great effect produced in England by the career of the United States. An emigration of three or four millions of persons from the United Kingdom, during the last forty years, has bound us to them by thousands of family ties, and therefore it follows that whatever there is that is good, and whatever there is that is free in America, which we have not, we know something about, and gradually may begin to wish for, and some day may insist upon having.

And when I speak of 'us,' I mean the people of this country. When I am asserting the fact that the people of England have a great interest in the well-being of the American Republic, I mean the people of England. I do not speak of the wearers of crowns or of coronets, but of the twenty millions of people in this country who live on their labour, and who, having no votes, are not counted

in our political census, but without whom there could be no British nation at all. I say that these have an interest, almost as great and direct as though they were living in Massachusetts or New York, in the tremendous struggle for freedom which is now shaking the whole North American Continent.

During the last two years there has been much said, and much written, and some things done in this country, which are calculated to gain us the hate of both sections of the American Union. I believe that a course of policy might have been taken by the English press, and by the English Government, and by what are called the influential classes in England, that would have bound them to our hearts and us to their hearts. I speak of the twenty millions of the Free North. I believe we might have been so thoroughly united with that people, that all remembrance of the war of the Revolution and of the war of 1812 would have been obliterated, and we should have been in heart and spirit for all time forth but one nation.

I can only hope that, as time passes, and our people become better informed, they will be more just, and that ill feeling of every kind will pass away; that in future all who love freedom here will hold converse with all who love freedom there, and that the two nations, separated as they are by the ocean, come as they are, notwithstanding, of one stock, may be in future time united in soul, and may work together for the advancement of the liberties and the happiness of mankind.

# AMERICA.

## IV.

### MR. ROEBUCK'S MOTION FOR RECOGNITION OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 30, 1863.

I WILL not attempt to follow the noble Lord in the laboured attack which he has made upon the Treasury Bench, for these two reasons:—that he did not appear to me very much to understand what it was he was condemning them for; and, again, I am not in the habit of defending Gentlemen who sit on that bench. I will address myself to the question before the House, which I think the House generally feels to be very important, although I am quite satisfied that they do not feel it to be a practical one. Neither do I think that the House will be disposed to take any course in support of the hon. Gentleman who introduced the resolution now before us.

We sometimes are engaged in discussions, and have great difficulty to know what we are about; but the hon. Gentleman left us in no kind of doubt when he sat down. He proposed a resolution, in words which, under certain circumstances and addressed to certain parties, might end in offensive or injurious consequences. Taken in connection with his character, and with the speech he has made to-night, and with the speech he has recently made elsewhere on

this subject, I may say that he would have come to about the same conclusion if he had proposed to address the Crown inviting the Queen to declare war against the United States of America. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is known not to be very zealous in the particular line of opinion that I have adopted, addressed the hon. Gentleman in the smoothest language possible, but still he was obliged to charge him with the tone of bitter hostility which marked his speech.

On a recent occasion the hon. Member addressed some members of his constituency—I do not mean in his last speech, I mean in the speech in August last year—in which he entered upon a course of prophecy which, like most prophecies in our day, does not happen to come true. But he said then what he said to-night, that the American people and Government were overbearing. He did not tell his constituents that the Government of the United States had, almost during the whole of his lifetime, been conducted by his friends of the South. He said that, if they were divided, they would not be able to bully the whole world; and he made use of these expressions: 'The North will never be our friends; of the South you can make friends, -they are Englishmen,—they are not the scum and refuse of the world.'

Mr. Roebuck: 'Allow me to correct that statement. What I said I now state to the House, that the men of the South were Englishmen, but that the army of the North was composed of the scum of Europe.'

Mr. Bright: I take, of course, that explanation of the hon. and learned Gentleman, with this explanation from me, that there is not, so far as I can find, any mention near that paragraph, and I think there is not in the speech a single word, about the army.

Mr. Roebuck: 'I assure you I said that.'

Mr. Bright: Then I take it for granted that the hon. and learned Gentleman said that, or that if he said what I have read he greatly regrets it.

Mr. Roebuck: 'No, I did not say it.'

Mr. Bright: The hon. and learned Gentleman in his resolution speaks of other powers. But he has unceremoniously got rid of all the powers but France, and he comes here to-night with a story of an interview with a man whom he describes as the great ruler of France—tells us of a conversation with him—asks us to accept the lead of the Emperor of the French on, I will undertake to say, one of the greatest questions that ever was submitted to the British Parliament. But it is not long since the hon. and learned Gentleman held very different language. I recollect in this House, only about two years ago, that the hon. and learned Gentleman said: 'I hope I may be permitted to express in respectful terms my opinion, even though it should affect so great a potentate as the Emperor of the French. I have no faith in the Emperor of the French.' On another occasion the hon. and learned Gentleman said,—not, I believe, in this House,—'I am still of opinion that we have nothing but animosity and bad faith to look for from the French Emperor.' And he went on to say that still, though he had been laughed at, he adopted the patriotic character of 'Tear-'em,' and was still at his post.

And when the hon. and learned Gentleman came back, I think from his expedition to Cherbourg, does the House recollect the language he used on that occasion—language which, if it expressed the sentiments which he felt, at least I think he might have been content to have withheld? If I am not mistaken, referring to the salutation between the Emperor of the French and the Queen of these kingdoms, he said, 'When I saw his perjured lips touch that hallowed cheek.' And now, Sir, the hon. and learned Gentleman has been to Paris, introduced there by the hon. Member for Sunderland, and he has sought to become as it were in the palace of the French Emperor a co-conspirator with him to drag this country into a policy which I maintain is as hostile to its interests as it would be degrading to its honour.

But then the high contracting parties, I suspect, are not agreed, because I will say this in justice to the French Emperor, that there has never come from him in public, nor from any one of his Ministers, nor is there anything to be found in what they have written, that is tinctured in the smallest degree with that bitter hostility which the hon. and learned Gentleman has constantly exhibited to the United States of America and their people. France, if not wise in this matter, is at least not unfriendly. The hon. and learned Member, in my opinion—indeed I am sure—is not friendly, and I believe he is not wise.

But now, on this subject, without speaking disrespectfully of the great potentate who has taken the hon. and learned Gentleman into his confidence, I must say that the Emperor runs the risk of being far too much represented in this House. We have now two—I will not call them envoys extraordinary, but most extraordinary. And, if report speaks true, even they are not all. The hon. Member for King's County (Mr. Hennessy)—I do not see him in his place—came back the other day from Paris, and there were whispers that he had seen the great ruler of France, and that he could tell everybody in the most confidential manner that the Emperor was ready to make a spring at Russia for the sake of delivering Poland, and that he only waited for a word from the Prime Minister of England.

I do not understand the policy of the Emperor if these new Ministers of his tell the truth. For, Sir, if one Gentleman says that he is about to make war with Russia, and another that he is about to make war with America, I am disposed to look at what he is already doing. I find that he is holding Rome against the opinion of all Italy. He is conquering Mexico by painful steps, every footstep marked by devastation and blood. He is warring, in some desultory manner, in China, and for aught I know he may be about to do it in Japan. I say that, if he is to engage, at the same

time, in dismembering the greatest Eastern Empire and the great Western Republic, he has a greater ambition than Louis XIV, a greater daring than the first of his name; and that, if he endeavours to grasp these great transactions, his dynasty may fall and be buried in the ruins of his own ambition.

I can say only one sentence upon the question to which the noble Lord has directed so much attention. I understand that we have not heard all the story from Paris, and further, that it is not at all remarkable, seeing that the secret has been confided to two persons, that we have not heard it correctly. I saw my hon. Friend, the Member for Sunderland, near me, and his face underwent remarkable contortions during the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and I felt perfectly satisfied that he did not agree with what his colleague was saying. I am told there is in existence a little memorandum which contains an account of what was said and done at that interview in Paris; and before the discussion closes we shall no doubt have that memorandum produced, and from it know how far these two gentlemen are agreed.

I now come to the proposition which the hon. and learned Gentleman has submitted to the House, and which he has already submitted to a meeting of his constituents at Sheffield. At that meeting, on the 27th of May, the hon. and learned Gentleman used these words: 'What I have to consider is, what are the interests of England: what is for her interests I believe to be for the interests of the world.' Now, leaving out of consideration the latter part of that statement, if the hon. and learned Gentleman will keep to the first part of it, then what we have now to consider in this question is, what is for the interest of England. But the hon. and learned Gentleman has put it to-night in almost as offensive a way as he did before at Sheffield, and has said that the United States would not bully the world if they were divided and subdivided; for he went so far as to contemplate division into

more than two independent sections. I say that the whole of his case rests upon a miserable jealousy of the United States, or on what I may term a base fear. It is a fear which appears to me just as groundless as any of those panics by which the hon. and learned Gentleman has attempted to frighten the country.

There never was a State in the world which was less capable of aggression with regard to Europe than the United States of America. I speak of its government, of its confederation, of the peculiarities of its organization; for the House will agree with me, that nothing is more peculiar than the fact of the great power which the separate States, both of the North and South, exercise upon the policy and course of the country. I will undertake to say, that, unless in a question of overwhelming magnitude, which would be able to unite any people, it would be utterly hopeless to expect that all the States of the American Union would join together to support the central Government in any plan of aggression on England or any other country of Europe.

Besides, nothing can be more certain than this, that the Government which is now in power, and the party which have elected Mr. Lincoln to office, is a moral and peaceable party, which has been above all things anxious to cultivate the best possible state of feeling with regard to England. The hon. and learned Gentleman, of all men, ought not to entertain this fear of United States aggression, for he is always boasting of his readiness to come into the field himself. I grant that it would be a great necessity indeed which would justify a conscription in calling out the hon. and learned Gentleman, but I say he ought to consider well before he spreads these alarms among the people. For the sake of this miserable jealousy, and that he may help to break up a friendly nation, he would depart from the usages of nations, and create an everlasting breach between the people of England and the people of the United States of America. He

would do more; and, notwithstanding what he has said to-night, I may put this as my strongest argument against his case—he would throw the weight of England into the scale in favour of the cause of slavery.

I want to show the hon. and learned Gentleman that England is not interested in the course he proposes we should take; and when I speak of interests, I mean the commercial interests, the political interests, and the moral interests of the country. And first, with regard to the supply of cotton, in which the noble Lord the Member for Stamford takes such a prodigious interest. I must explain to the noble Lord that I know a little about cotton. I happen to have been engaged in that business,—not all my life, for the noble Lord has seen me here for twenty years,—but my interests have been in it; and at this moment the firm of which I am a member have no less than six mills, which have been at a stand for nearly a year, owing to the impossibility of working under the present conditions of the supply of cotton. I live among a people who live by this trade; and there is no man in England who has a more direct interest in it than I have. Before the war, the supply of cotton was little and costly, and every year it was becoming more costly, for the supply did not keep pace with the demand.

The point that I am about to argue is this: I believe that the war which is now raging in America is more likely to abolish slavery than not, and more likely to abolish it than any other thing that can be proposed in the world. I regret very much that the pride and passion of men are such as to justify me in making this statement. The supply of cotton under slavery must always be insecure. The House felt so in past years; for at my recommendation they appointed a committee, and but for the folly of a foolish Minister they would have appointed a special commission to India at my request. Is there any gentleman in this House who will not agree with me in this,—that it would be far better for our great

Lancashire industry that our supply of cotton should be grown by free labour than by slave labour?

Before the war, the whole number of negroes engaged in the production of cotton was about one million,—that is, about a fourth of the whole of the negroes in the Slave States. The annual increase in the number of negroes growing cotton was about twenty-five thousand,—only two and a-half per cent. It was impossible for the Southern States to keep up their growth of sugar, rice, tobacco, and their ordinary slave productions, and at the same time to increase the growth of cotton more than at a rate corresponding with the annual increase of negroes. Therefore you will find that the quantity of cotton grown, taking ten years together, increased only at the rate of about one hundred thousand bales a-year. But that was nothing like the quantity which we required. That supply could not be increased, because the South did not cultivate more than probably one and a-half per cent. of the land which was capable of cultivation for cotton.

The great bulk of the land in the Southern States is uncultivated. Ten thousand square miles are appropriated to the cultivation of cotton; but there are six hundred thousand square miles, or sixty times as much land, which is capable of being cultivated for cotton. It was, however, impossible that the land should be so cultivated, because, although you had climate and sun, you had no labour. The institution of slavery forbade free-labour men in the North to come to the South; and every emigrant that landed in New York from Europe knew that the Slave States were no States for him, and therefore he went North or West. The laws of the United States, the sentiments of Europe and of the world, being against any opening of the slave-trade, the planters of the South were shut up, and the annual increase in the supply of cotton could increase only in the same proportion as the annual increase in the number of their negroes.

There is only one other point with regard to that matter

which is worth mentioning. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Sheffield will understand it, although on some points he seems to be peculiarly dark. If a planter in the Southern States wanted to grow one thousand bales of cotton a-year, he would require about two hundred negroes. Taking them at five hundred dollars, or one hundred pounds each, which is not more than half the price of a first-class hand, the cost of the two hundred would be twenty thousand pounds. To grow one thousand bales of cotton a-year you require not only to possess an estate, machinery, tools, and other things necessary to carry on the cotton-growing business, but you must find a capital of twenty thousand pounds to buy the actual labourers by whom the plantation is to be worked; and therefore, as every gentleman will see at once, this great trade, to a large extent, was shut up in the hands of men who were required to be richer than would be necessary if slavery did not exist.

Thus the plantation business to a large extent became a monopoly, and therefore even on that account the production of cotton was constantly limited and controlled. I was speaking to a gentleman the other day from Mississippi. I believe no man in America or in England is more acquainted with the facts of this case. He has been for many years a Senator from the State of Mississippi. He told me that every one of these facts were true, and said, 'I have no doubt whatever that in ten years after freedom in the South, or after freedom in conjunction with the North, the production of cotton will be doubled, and cotton will be forwarded to the consumers of the world at a much less price than we have had it for many years past.'

I shall turn for a moment to the political interest, to which the hon. and learned Gentleman paid much more attention than to the commercial. The more I consider the course of this war, the more I come to the conclusion that it is improbable in future that the United States will be

broken into separate republics. I do not come to the conclusion that the North will conquer the South. But I think the conclusion to which I am more disposed to come now than at any time since the breaking out of the war is this,—that if a separation should occur for a time, still the interest, the sympathies, the sentiments, the necessities of the whole continent, and its ambition also, which, as hon. Gentlemen have mentioned, seems to some people to be a necessity, render it highly probable that the continent would still be united under one central Government. I may be quite mistaken. I do not express that opinion with any more confidence than hon. Gentlemen have expressed theirs in favour of a permanent dissolution; but now is not this possible,—that the Union may be again formed on the basis of the South? There are persons who think that possible. I hope it is not, but we cannot say that it is absolutely impossible.

Is it not possible that the Northern Government may be baffled in their military operations? Is it not possible that, by their own incapacity, they may be humiliated before their own people? And is it not even possible that the party which you please to call the Peace party in the North, but which is in no sense a peace party, should unite with the South, and that the Union should be reconstituted on the basis of Southern opinions and of the Southern social system? Is it not possible, for example, that the Southern people, and those in their favour, should appeal to the Irish population of America against the negroes, between whom there has been little sympathy and little respect; and is it not possible they should appeal to the commercial classes of the North—and the rich commercial classes in all countries, who, from the uncertainty of their possessions and the fluctuation of their interests, are rendered always timid and very often corrupt—is it not possible, I say, that they might prefer the union of their whole country upon the basis

of the South, rather than that union which many Members of this House look upon with so much apprehension?

If that should ever take place—but I believe, with my hon. Friend below me (Mr. Forster), in the moral government of the world, and therefore I cannot believe that it will take place; but if it were to take place, with their great armies, and with their great navy, and their almost unlimited power, they might seek to drive England out of Canada, France out of Mexico, and whatever nations are interested in them out of the islands of the West Indies; and you might then have a great State built upon slavery and war, instead of that free State to which I look, built up upon an educated people, upon general freedom, and upon morality in government.

Now there is one more point to which the hon. and learned Gentleman will forgive me if I allude—he does not appear to me to think it of great importance—and that is, the morality of this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the hon. Gentleman who spoke from the bench behind—and I think the noble Lord, if I am not mistaken—referred to the carnage which is occasioned by this lamentable strife. Well, carnage, I presume, is the accompaniment of all war. Two years ago the press of London ridiculed very much the battles of the United States, in which nobody was killed and few were hurt. There was a time when I stood up in this House, and pointed out the dreadful horrors of war. There was a war waged by this country in the Crimea; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with an uneasy conscience, is constantly striving to defend that struggle. That war—for it lasted about the same time that the American war has lasted—at least destroyed as many lives as are estimated to have been destroyed in the United States.

My hon. Friend the Member for Montrose, who, I think, is not in the House, made a speech in Scotland some time

last year, in which he gave the numbers which were lost by Russia in that war. An hon. Friend near me observes, that some people do not reckon the Russians for anything. I say, if you will add the Russians to the English, and the two to the French, and the three to the Sardinians, and the four to the Turks, that more lives were lost in the invasion of the Crimea, in the two years that it lasted, than have been lost hitherto in the American war. That is no defence of the carnage of the American war; but let hon. Gentlemen bear in mind that, when I protested against the carnage in the Crimea—for an object which few could comprehend and nobody can fairly explain—I was told that I was actuated by a morbid sentimentality. Well, if I am converted, if I view the mortality in war with less horror than I did then, it must be attributed to the arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite and on the Treasury bench; but the fact is, I view this carnage just as I viewed that, with only this difference, that while our soldiers perished three thousand miles from home in a worthless and indefensible cause, these men were on their own soil, and every man of them knew for what he enlisted and for what purpose he was to fight.

Now, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and those who are of opinion with him on this question of slaughter in the American war—a slaughter which I hope there is no hon. Member here, and no person out of this House, that does not in his calm moments look upon with grief and horror—to consider what was the state of things before the war. It was this: that every year in the Slave States of America there were one hundred and fifty thousand children born into the world—born with the badge and the doom of slavery—born to the liability by law, and by custom, and by the devilish cupidity of man—to the lash and to the chain and to the branding-iron, and to be taken from their families and carried they know not where.

I want to know whether you feel as I feel upon this question. When I can get down to my home from this House, I find half a dozen little children playing upon my hearth. How many Members are there who can say with me, that the most innocent, the most pure, the most holy joy which in their past years they have felt, or in their future years they have hoped for, has not arisen from contact and association with our precious children? Well, then, if that be so—if, when the hand of Death takes one of those flowers from our dwelling, our heart is overwhelmed with sorrow and our household is covered with gloom; what would it be if our children were brought up to this infernal system—one hundred and fifty thousand of them every year brought into the world in these Slave States, amongst these 'gentlemen,' amongst this 'chivalry,' amongst these men that we can make our friends?

Do you forget the thousand-fold griefs and the countless agonies which belonged to the silent conflict of slavery before the war began? It is all very well for the hon. and learned Gentleman to tell me, to tell this House—he will not tell the country with any satisfaction to it—that slavery, after all, is not so bad a thing. The brother of my hon. Friend the Member for South Durham told me that in North Carolina he himself saw a woman whose every child, ten in number, had been sold when they grew up to the age at which they would fetch a price to their master.

I have not heard a word to-night of another matter—the Proclamation of the President of the United States. The hon. and learned Gentleman spoke somewhere in the country, and he had not the magnanimity to abstain from a statement which I was going to say he must have known had no real foundation. I can make all allowance for the passion—and I was going to say the malice—but I will say the ill-will of the hon. and learned Gentleman; but I make no allowance for his ignorance. I make no allowance for

that, because if he is ignorant it is his own fault, for God has given him an intellect which ought to keep him from ignorance on a question of this magnitude. I now take that Proclamation. What do you propose to do? You propose by your resolution to help the South, if possible, to gain and sustain its independence. Nobody doubts that. The hon. and learned Gentleman will not deny it. But what becomes of the Proclamation? I should like to ask any lawyer in what light we stand as regards that Proclamation? To us there is only one country in what was called the United States; there is only one President, there is only one general Legislature, there is only one law; and if that Proclamation be lawful anywhere, we are not in a condition to deny its legality, because at present we know no President Davis, nor do we know the men who are about him. We have our Consuls in the South, but recognizing only one Legislature, one President, one law. So far as we are concerned, that Proclamation is a legal and effective document.

I want to know, to ask you, the House of Commons, whether you have turned back to your own proceedings in 1834, and traced the praises which have been lavished upon you for thirty years by the great and good men of other countries,—and whether, after what you did at that time, you believe that you will meet the views of the thoughtful, moral, and religious people of England, when you propose to remit to slavery three millions of negroes in the Southern States, who in our views, and regarding the Proclamation of the only President of the United States as a legal document, are certainly and to all intents and purposes free? ['Oh!'] The hon. and learned Gentleman may say 'Oh!' and shake his head lightly, and be scornful at this. He has managed to get rid of all those feelings under which all men, black and white, like to be free. He has talked of the cant and hypocrisy of these men. Was Wilberforce, was Clarkson, was Buxton,—I might run over the whole list,—were

these men hypocrites, and had they nothing about them but cant?

I could state something about the family of my hon. Friend below me (Mr. Forster), which I almost fear to state in his presence; but his revered father—a man unsurpassed in character, not equalled by many in intellect, and approached by few in service—laid down his life in a Slave State in America, while carrying to the governors and legislatures of every Slave State the protest of himself and his sect against the enormity of that odious system.

In conclusion, Sir, I have only this to say,—that I wish to take a generous view of this question,—a view, I say, generous with regard to the people with whom we are in amity, whose Minister we receive here, and who receive our Minister in Washington. We see that the Government of the United States has for two years past been contending for its life, and we know that it is contending necessarily for human freedom. That Government affords the remarkable example—offered for the first time in the history of the world—of a great Government coming forward as the organized defender of law, freedom, and equality.

Surely hon. Gentlemen opposite cannot be so ill-informed as to say that the revolt of the Southern States is in favour of freedom and equality. In Europe often, and in some parts of America, when there has been insurrection, it has generally been of the suffering against the oppressor, and rarely has it been found, and not more commonly in our history than in the history of any other country, that the Government has stepped forward as the organized defender of freedom—of the wide and general freedom of those under its rule. With such a Government, in such a contest, with such a foe, the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Sheffield, who professes to be more an Englishman than most Englishmen, asks us to throw into the scale against it the weight of the hostility of England.

I have not said a word with regard to what may happen to England if we go into war with the United States. It will be a war upon the ocean,—every ship that belongs to the two nations will, as far as possible, be swept from the seas. But when the troubles in America are over,—be they ended by the restoration of the Union, or by separation,—that great and free people, the most instructed in the world,—there is not an American to be found in the New England States who cannot read and write, and there are not three men in one hundred in the whole Northern States who cannot read and write,—and those who cannot read and write are those who have recently come from Europe,—I say the most instructed people in the world, and the most wealthy,—if you take the distribution of wealth among the whole people,—will have a wound in their hearts by your act which a century may not heal; and the posterity of some of those who now hear my voice may look back with amazement, and I will say with lamentation, at the course which was taken by the hon. and learned Gentleman, and by such hon. Members as may choose to follow his leading. ['No! No!'] I suppose the hon. Gentlemen who cry 'No!' will admit that we sometimes suffer from the errors of our ancestors. There are few persons who will not admit that, if their fathers had been wiser, their children would have been happier.

We know the cause of this revolt, its purposes, and its aims. Those who made it have not left us in darkness respecting their intentions, but what they are to accomplish is still hidden from our sight; and I will abstain now, as I have always abstained with regard to it, from predicting what is to come. I know what I hope for,—and what I shall rejoice in,—but I know nothing of future facts that will enable me to express a confident opinion. Whether it will give freedom to the race which white men have trampled in the dust, and whether the issue will purify a nation steeped in crimes committed against that race, is known

only to the Supreme. In His hands are alike the breath of man and the life of States. I am willing to commit to Him the issue of this dreaded contest; but I implore of Him, and I beseech this House, that my country may lift nor hand nor voice in aid of the most stupendous act of guilt that history has recorded in the annals of mankind.

# AMERICA.

## VII.

LONDON, JUNE 29, 1867.

[The following speech was made at a public breakfast given to William Lloyd Garrison, in St. James's Hall, at which Mr. Bright occupied the Chair.]

THE position in which I am placed this morning is one very unusual for me, and one that I find somewhat difficult; but I consider it a signal distinction to be permitted to take a prominent part in the proceedings of this day, which are intended to commemorate one of the greatest of the great triumphs of freedom, and to do honour to a most eminent instrument in the achievement of that freedom. There may be, perhaps, those who ask what is this triumph of which I speak. To put it briefly, and, indeed, only to put one part of it, I may say that it is a triumph which has had the effect of raising 4,000,000 of human beings from the very lowest depth of social and political degradation to that lofty height which men have attained when they possess equality of rights in the first country on the globe. More than this, it is a triumph which has pronounced the irreversible doom of slavery in all countries and for all time. Another question suggests itself—how has this great triumph been accomplished? The

answer suggests itself in another question—How is it that any great thing is accomplished? By love of justice, by constant devotion to a great cause, and by an unfaltering faith that what is right will in the end succeed.

When I look at this hall, filled with such an assembly—when I partake of the sympathy which runs from heart to heart at this moment in welcome to our guest of to-day—I cannot but contrast his present position with that which, not so far back but that many of us can remember, he occupied in his own country. It is not forty years ago, I believe about the year 1829, when the guest whom we honour this morning was spending his solitary days in a prison in the slave-owning city of Baltimore. I will not say that he was languishing in prison, for that I do not believe; he was sustained by a hope that did not yield to the persecution of those who thus maltreated him; and to show that the effect of that imprisonment was of no avail to suppress or extinguish his ardour, within two years after that he had the courage, the audacity—I dare say many of his countrymen used even a stronger phrase than that—he had the courage to commence the publication, in the city of Boston, of a newspaper devoted mainly to the question of the abolition of slavery. The first number of that paper, issued on the 1st of January, 1831, contained an address to the public, one passage of which I have often read with the greatest interest, and it is a key to the future life of Mr. Garrison. He had been complained of for having used hard language—which is a very common complaint indeed—and he said in his first number:—

'I am aware that many object to the severity of my language, but is there not cause for such severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. I am in earnest, I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retract a single inch, and I will be heard.'

And that, after all, expresses to a great extent the future course of his life. But what was at that time the temper of the people amongst whom he lived—of the people who are

glorying now, as they well may glory, in the abolition of slavery throughout their country? At that time it was very little better in the North than it was in the South. I think it was in the year 1835 that riots of the most serious character took place in some of the Northern cities: during that time Mr. Garrison's life was in imminent peril; and he has never ascertained to this day how it was that he was left alive on the earth to carry out his great work. Turning to the South, a State that has lately suffered from the ravages of armies, the State of Georgia, by its legislature of House, Senate, and Governor, if my memory does not deceive me, passed a bill, offering 10,000 dollars reward—[Mr. Garrison here said '5,000']—well, they seemed to think there were people who would do it cheap—offering 5,000 dollars, and zeal, doubtless, would make up the difference, for the capture of Mr. Garrison, or for adequate proof of his death. Now, these were menaces and perils such as we have not in our time been accustomed to in this country in any of our political movements, and we shall take a very poor measure indeed of the conduct of the leaders of the Emancipation party in the United States if we estimate them by that of any of those who have been concerned in political movements amongst us. But, notwithstanding all drawbacks, the cause was gathering strength, and Mr. Garrison found himself by-and-by surrounded by a small but increasing band of men and women who were devoted to this cause, as he himself was. We have in this country a very noble woman, who taught the English people much upon this question about thirty years ago: I allude to Harriet Martineau. I recollect well the impression with which I read a most powerful and touching paper which she had written, and which was published in the number of the *Westminster Review* for December, 1838. It was entitled 'The Martyr Age of the United States.' The paper introduced to the English public the great names which were appearing on the scene in connection with this cause in America. There

was, of course I need hardly say, our eminent guest of to-day; there was Arthur Tappan, and Lewis Tappan, and James G. Birney of Alabama, a planter and slave-owner, who liberated his slaves and came North, and became, I believe, the first Presidential candidate upon Abolition principles in the United States. There were besides them, Dr. Channing, John Quincy Adams, a statesman and President of the United States, and father of the eminent man who is now Minister from that people amongst us. Then there was Wendell Phillips, admitted to be by all who know him perhaps the most powerful orator who speaks the English language. I might refer to others, to Charles Sumner, the scholar and statesman, and Horace Greeley, the first of journalists in the United States, if not the first of journalists in the world. But, besides these, there were of noble women not a few. There was Lydia Maria Child; there were the two sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, ladies who came from South Carolina, who liberated their slaves, and devoted all they had to the service of this just cause; and Maria Weston Chapman, of whom Miss Martineau speaks in terms which, though I do not exactly recollect them, yet I know describe her as noble-minded, beautiful, and good. It may be that there are some of her family who are now within the sound of my voice. If it be so, all I have to say is, that I hope they will feel, in addition to all they have felt heretofore as to the character of their mother, that we who are here can appreciate her services, and the services of all who were united with her as co-operators in this great and worthy cause. But there was another whose name must not be forgotten, a man whose name must live for ever in history, Elijah P. Lovejoy, who in the free State of Illinois laid down his life for the cause. When I read that article by Harriet Martineau, and the description of those men and women there given, I was led, I know not how, to think of a very striking passage which I am sure must be familiar to most here, because it is to be

found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After the writer of that Epistle has described the great men and fathers of the nation, he says:—'Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephtha, of David, of Samuel, and the Prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.' I ask if this grand passage of the inspired writer may not be applied to that heroic band who have made America the perpetual home of freedom?

Thus, in spite of all that persecutions could do, opinion grew in the North in favour of freedom; but in the South, alas! in favour of that most devilish delusion that slavery was a Divine institution. The moment that idea took possession of the South, war was inevitable. Neither fact, nor argument, nor counsel, nor philosophy, nor religion, could by any possibility affect the discussion of the question when once the Church leaders of the South had taught their people that slavery was a Divine institution; for then they took their stand on other and different, and what they in their blindness thought higher grounds, and they said, 'Evil! be thou my good;' and so they exchanged light for darkness, and freedom for bondage, and good for evil, and, if you like, heaven for hell. Of course, unless there was some stupendous miracle, greater than any that is on record even in the inspired writings, it was impossible that war should not spring out of that state of things; and the political slaveholders, that 'dreadful brotherhood, in whom all turbulent passions were let loose,' the moment they found that the presidential election of 1860 was adverse to the cause of slavery, took up arms to sustain their cherished and endangered system. Then came the outbreak which had been so often foretold, so often menaced; and the ground reeled under the nation during four years of agony, until at last, after the smoke of

the battle-field had cleared away, the horrid shape which had cast its shadow over a whole continent had vanished, and was gone for ever. An ancient and renowned poet has said—

'Unholy is the voice
Of loud thanksgiving over slaughtered men.'

It becomes us not to rejoice, but to be humbled, that a chastisement so terrible should have fallen upon any of our race; but we may be thankful for this—that this chastisement was at least not sent in vain. The great triumph in the field was not all; there came after it another great triumph—a triumph over passion, and there came up before the world the spectacle, not of armies and military commanders, but of the magnanimity and mercy of a powerful and victorious nation. The vanquished were treated as the vanquished, in the history of the world, have never before been treated. There was a universal feeling in the North that every care should be taken of those who had so recently and marvellously been enfranchised. Immediately we found that the privileges of independent labour were open to them, schools were established in which their sons might obtain an education that would raise them to an intellectual position never reached by their fathers; and at length full political rights were conferred upon those who a few short years, or rather months before, had been called chattels, and things, to be bought and sold in any market. And we may feel assured, that those persons in the Northern States who befriended the negro in his bondage will not now fail to assist his struggles for a higher position. May we not say, reviewing what has taken place—and I have only glanced in the briefest possible way at the chief aspects of this great question—that probably history has no sadder, and yet, if we take a different view, I may say also probably no brighter page? To Mr. Garrison more than to any other man this is due; his is the creation of that opinion which has made slavery hateful, and which has

made freedom possible in America. His name is venerated in his own country—venerated where not long ago it was a name of obloquy and reproach. His name is venerated in this country and in Europe wheresoever Christianity softens the hearts and lessens the sorrows of men; and I venture to say that in time to come, near or remote I know not, his name will become the herald and the synonym of good to millions of men who will dwell on the now almost unknown continent of Africa.

But we must not allow our own land to be forgotten or depreciated, even whilst we are saying what our feelings bid us say of our friend beside me and of our other friends across the water. We, too, can share in the triumph I have described, and in the honours which the world is willing to shower upon our guest, and upon those who, like him, are unwearied in doing good. We have had slaves in the colonial territories that owned the sway of this country. Our position was different from that in which the Americans stood towards theirs; the negroes were far from being so numerous, and they were not in our midst, but 4,000 miles away. We had no prejudices of colour to overcome, we had a Parliament that was omnipotent in those colonies, and public opinion acting upon that Parliament was too powerful for the Englishmen who were interested in the continuance of slavery. We liberated our slaves; for the English soil did not reject the bondsman, but the moment he touched it made him free. We have now in our memory Clarkson, and Wilberforce, and Buxton, and Sturge; and even now we have within this hall the most eloquent living English champion of the freedom of the slave in my friend, and our friend, George Thompson. Well, then, I may presume to say that we are sharers in that good work which has raised our guest to eminence; and we may divide it with the country from which he comes. Our country is still his; for did not his fathers bear allegiance to our ancient monarchy, and were they not at one time

citizens of this commonwealth? and may we not add that the freedom which now overspreads his noble nation first sprang into life amongst our own ancestors? To Mr. Garrison, as is stated in one of the letters which has just been read, to William Lloyd Garrison it has been given, in a manner not often permitted to those who do great things of this kind, to see the ripe fruit of his vast labours. Over a territory large enough to make many realms, he has seen hopeless toil supplanted by compensated industry; and where the bondman dragged his chain, there freedom is established for ever. We now welcome him amongst us as a friend whom some of us have known long; for I have watched his career with no common interest, even when I was too young to take much part in public affairs; and I have kept within my heart his name, and the names of those who have been associated with him in every step which he has taken; and in public debates in the halls of peace, and even on the blood-soiled fields of war, my heart has always been with those who were the friends of freedom. We welcome him, then, with a cordiality which knows no stint and no limit for him and for his noble associates, both men and women; and we venture to speak a verdict which, I believe, will be sanctioned by all mankind, not only by those who live now, but by those who shall come after, to whom their perseverance and their success shall be a lesson and a help in the future struggles which remain for men to make. One of our oldest and greatest poets has furnished me with a line that well expresses that verdict. Are not William Lloyd Garrison and his fellow-labourers in that world's work—are they not

'On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed?'

# IRELAND.

# IRELAND.

## I.

### MAYNOOTH GRANT.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 16, 1845.

[On April 3rd Sir Robert Peel proposed a Resolution for the improvement of Maynooth College, the grant to consist of 26,000*l.* per annum. It was suggested by some speakers, that the act would justify the endowment of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and Lord John Russell asserted that such a plan would be a larger, more liberal, and more statesmanlike measure. Others objected to the grant on theological grounds, others for the reason that it was a step towards endowing another Church Establishment in Ireland. The Resolution was carried by 216 to 114. The debate on the Bill was resumed on April 10th, and was continued on April 14th and 16th. The second reading was carried on the last day by 323 votes to 176; on May 2nd the Bill passed through Committee. It was opposed again on bringing up the Report, on May 5th, and was finally passed on May 21st, by 317 to 184. The Bill, after opposition, passed in the Lords on June 10th.]

I AM anxious to make a few observations on the principle on which I shall give my vote; because I shall be obliged to pass into the lobby along with a number of Members of the House from whose principles I entirely dissent; and after the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Bandon, I think that any one who votes with him has need to explain why he votes on his side, for anything more unlike the principles of the present day, more intolerant, or

more insane with respect to the policy to be pursued towards Ireland, I have never heard; and I could not have believed that any man coming from that country could have used such language in addressing this House. I do not think that this question is to be looked at in a favourable or unfavourable light because of the party from which it comes. Some hon. Members have charged the right hon. Baronet with inconsistency, and have in some degree thrown the blame of his conduct on the measure which he has introduced. The right hon. Baronet has, from unfortunate circumstances, been connected in Opposition with a party of such a nature, that he could never promote any good measure whilst in power without being charged, and justly, with inconsistent conduct. But I will look at the measure as a measure by itself, and if it be a good measure I will vote for it as willingly, coming from the present Government, as if it came from the Government which preceded it. But I object to this measure on the ground that it is proposed to vote some of the public taxes for the purpose of maintaining an institution purely ecclesiastical, and for the rearing and educating of the priests of a particular sect. I am the more strongly against the Bill, because, from all that has been said on both sides of the House, and from all that I can learn from the public papers, and even from the organs of the Government, I am convinced that there is no argument which has been used in defence of this measure, which would not be just as valid for the defence of further measures, not for the payment of Catholic priests of the College of Maynooth only, but for the payment of all the priests in Ireland or in England. I admit that the principles and the arguments which have justified the original vote are good to some extent to justify this vote. The right hon. Baronet in his opening speech has stated that the principle was conceded, that it is but a matter of a few thousand pounds. But if the principle were conceded now, ten or twenty years hence some Prime Minister might stand up and

state that in 1795 the principle was conceded, and in 1845 that concession—or rather, that principle—was again sanctioned; and then, arguing from the two cases, it would be easy to demonstrate that it was no violation of principle whatever to establish a new Church in Ireland, and add thereby to the monstrous evils which exist there now from the establishment of one in connection with the State. The right hon. Baronet has paid no great compliment to the Irish Catholics in the possession of means and property, when he has said that the 9,000*l.* now voted is just sufficient to damp the generosity of the people of that country. If 9,000*l.* were enough in some degree to check their generosity, I should think that a sum of 26,000*l.* is sufficient to destroy it altogether. When I consider that the Catholic gentry of Ireland pay no Income Tax and no Property Tax, and no Assessed Taxes, I do not think it would be a thing altogether impossible, or to be unlooked for, that they should have supported an establishment for the rearing of priests to teach that religion to which they profess to be so much devoted.

But the object of this measure was just as objectionable to me when I learned that it was intended by this vote to soothe the discontent which exists in Ireland. I will look at the causes whence this discontent arises. Does it arise because the priests of Maynooth are now insufficiently clad or fed? I have always thought that it arose from the fact that one-third of the people are paupers—that almost all of them are not in regular employment at the very lowest rate of wages—and that the state of things amongst the bulk of the population is most disastrous, and to be deplored; but I cannot for the life of me conceive how the grant of additional money to Maynooth is to give additional employment, or food, or clothing to the people of Ireland, or make them more satisfied with their condition. I can easily see how, by the granting of this sum, the Legislature may hear far less in future times of the sufferings and

wrongs of the people of Ireland than they have heard heretofore; for they may discover that one large means of influence, possessed by those who had agitated for the redress of Irish wrongs, is to be found in the support which the Irish Catholic clergy has given to the various associations for carrying on political agitation; and the object of this Bill is to tame down those agitators—it is a sop given to the priests. It is hush-money given, that they may not proclaim to the whole country, to Europe, and to the world, the sufferings of the population to whom they administer the rites and the consolations of religion. I assert that the Protestant Church of Ireland is at the root of the evils of that country. The Irish Catholics would thank you infinitely more if you were to wipe out that foul blot, than they would even if Parliament were to establish the Roman Catholic Church alongside of it. They have had everything Protestant—a Protestant clique which has been dominant in the country; a Protestant Viceroy to distribute places and emoluments amongst that Protestant clique; Protestant judges who have polluted the seats of justice; Protestant magistrates, before whom the Catholic peasant could not hope for justice. They have not only Protestant, but exterminating landlords, and more than that, a Protestant soldiery, who, at the beck and command of a Protestant priest, have butchered and killed a Catholic peasant, even in the presence of his widowed mother. All these things are notorious; I merely state them. I do not bring the proof of them: they are patent to all the world, and that man must have been unobservant indeed who is not perfectly convinced of their truth. The consequence of all this is, the extreme discontent of the Irish people; and because this House is not prepared yet to take those measures which would be really doing justice to Ireland, and to wipe away that Protestant Establishment which is the most disgraceful institution in Christendom; the next thing is, that they should drive off the watch-dogs, if it be possible, and

take from Mr. O'Connell and the Repeal Association that formidable organization which has been established throughout the whole country, through the sympathies of the Catholic priests being bound up with the interests of the people. Their object is to take away the sympathy of the Catholic priests from the people, and to give them more Latin and Greek. The object is to make the priests in Ireland as tame as those of Suffolk and Dorsetshire. The object is, that when the horizon is brightened every night with incendiary fires, no priest of the paid Establishment shall ever tell of the wrongs of the people amongst whom he is living; and when the population is starving, and pauperised by thousands, as in the southern parts of England, the priests shall not unite themselves with any association for the purpose of wresting from an oppressive Government those rights to which the people have a claim.

I am altogether against this system for any purpose, under any circumstances, at any time whatever. Nothing can be more disastrous to the best interests of the community, nor more dangerous to religion itself. If the Government wants to make the priests of Ireland as useless for all practical purposes as the paid priests of their own Establishment, they should not give them 26,000*l.* merely, but as much as they can persuade the House to agree to. Ireland is suffering, not from the want of another Church, but rather because she already has one Church too many; for with the present Church, having a small community, overpaid ministers, a costly Establishment, and little work, it is quite impossible to have peace and content in that country. If you give the Catholic priests a portion of the public funds, as the Government has given the *Regium Donum* to the Presbyterians of the North, they will unite with the Church as the Presbyterians did against any attempt to overturn the old system of Church and State alliance in that country.

The experience of State Churches is not of a character to

warrant the House in going further in that direction. In this country there is a State Church, and I do not deny that there are many excellent ministers in it; but from time immemorial it has been characterized by a most deplorable and disastrous spirit of persecution, which even at this hour still exists; for that Church is now persecuting a poor shoemaker at Cambridge for non-payment of Church rates, and pursuing him from court to court. That Church has been upheld as a bulwark against Catholicism, and yet all the errors of Catholicism find a home and a hearty welcome there. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, and in other counties, that Church is found to be too unwieldy a machine, and altogether unfitted to a population growing in numbers and intelligence like that of those parts of the kingdom. Even in Scotland, where there is a model of the most perfect Establishment which perhaps could be raised, there are the Secession Church, the Relief Church, and the Free Church; that which the State upholds being called by the complimentary name of the Residuary Church. After the experience of such State Churches, which have done so little good and so much evil, is this a time for establishing another Church? If I approved of Church endowments by the State I would vote for this Bill with all my heart, because it is calculated to create a kinder feeling towards this country amongst the people of Ireland.

Two parties opposed to the Bill are represented by hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. They state that the Roman Catholic religion should not be established or helped by the State. But when their Church is absorbing millions of the public money, while millions of their countrymen refuse to enter its doors, how can they for a moment object to the passing of a measure which will give some sort of show of assistance to that Church to which millions of the Irish people belong? The Nonconformist or Dissenting party in this country are opposed to the measure; but by some of them a spirit is mixed

up with their agitation of this question which shows that they do not understand, or do not value, the great principles of Nonconformity, for which their forefathers struggled and suffered. I allude more especially to a portion of the Wesleyan body, which, I believe, does not altogether repudiate the principle of endowment.

But, with regard to the rest, I am persuaded that their agitation against this measure is honest. If the Dissenters look back to all that their forefathers have suffered, aye, even within a late period, they will be recreant to their own principles, and merit the contempt of the House and of the world, if they do not come forward manfully to uphold their own principles, and dissent from and oppose the measure under the consideration of the House. For myself, I shall oppose the Bill in every stage, simply on one ground, that I believe the principle of endowment to be most unjust and injurious to the country, and whatever may be the effect on any Government, whether that of the right hon. Baronet or any that has preceded or will succeed him, no strength of attachment to party or Government will induce me to tamper with what I hold to be the greatest and dearest principle which any man or any body of men can assert. When I look back to the history of this country, and consider its present condition, I must say, that all that the people possess of liberty has come, not through the portals of the cathedrals and the parish churches, but from the conventicles, which are despised by hon. Gentlemen opposite. When I know that if a good measure is to be carried in this House, it must be by men who are sent hither by the Nonconformists of Great Britain; when I read and see that the past and present State alliance with religion is hostile to religious liberty, preventing all growth and nearly destroying all vitality in religion itself, then I shall hold myself to have read, thought, and lived in vain, if I vote for a measure which in the smallest degree shall give any further power or life to the principle of State endow-

ment; and, in conclusion, I will only exhort the Dissenters of England to act in the same way, and to stand upon their own great, pure, and unassailable principle; for, if they stand by it manfully, and work for it vigorously, the time may come, nay, it will come, when that principle will be adopted by the Legislature of the country.

# IRELAND.

## II.

### CRIME AND OUTRAGE BILL.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 13, 1847.

[Towards the conclusion of this year (1847) numerous crimes and outrages of a serious character were committed in Ireland. They were chiefly agrarian. In order to increase the powers of the Irish Executive, Parliament was invited in the Queen's Speech (Nov. 23) to take further precautions against the perpetration of crime in certain counties in Ireland. The Bill was moved by Sir George Grey on Nov. 29, and leave was given, by 224 votes to 18, was read a second time (296 to 19) on Dec. 9, and passed (174 to 14) on Dec. 13. It was passed in the House of Lords on Dec. 19. On July 31, 1848, the Irish Government proclaimed certain districts in which rebellion had broken out. Smith O'Brien and the other leaders of the insurgents were speedily arrested, tried, and convicted.]

I FEEL very much in the position of the hon. Member who has just addressed the House, for I am in some degree compelled to speak before this Bill is read a third time. I have presented a petition against the Bill, signed by more than 20,000 persons, inhabitants of the borough of Manchester, and I am unwilling to vote without briefly giving the reasons which make it impossible for me to oppose this Bill. When I recollect the circumstances attending the rejection of the Bill of 1846, for the protection of life in Ireland, I am convinced that the Government would not have brought forward

the present measure if it had not appeared to them absolutely necessary, and that, but for this supposed necessity, it would never have been heard of.

The case of the Government, so far as the necessity for this Bill is concerned, seems to me to be as clear and as perfect as it can be. From the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Home Department, from the unanimous statements of all the newspapers, and from the evidence of all parties connected with Ireland, it is placed beyond a doubt that in the disturbed districts of Ireland the ordinary law is utterly powerless. The reason why the law is carried into effect in England is, because the feeling of the people is in favour of it, and every man is willing to become and is in reality a peace officer, in order to further the ends of justice.

But in Ireland this state of things does not exist. The public sentiment in certain districts is depraved and thoroughly vitiated. [Mr. J. O'Connell, 'No! No!'] The hon. Member cries 'No, No;' but I maintain that in the disturbed districts the public or popular feeling is as I have described it. I do not mean to assert that all which the newspapers contain is true, or that they contain all the truth; but I ask the hon. Gentleman if he has not read accounts which are not contradicted, from which we learn that on the occurrence of some recent cases of assassination, whole districts have been in a state of rejoicing and exultation? These assassinations are not looked upon as murders, but rather as executions. Take the case of Mr. Lloyd, a clergyman, who was recently assassinated. There was no show of vindictive feeling on the part of his murderers; there was little of the character of ordinary murders in it. The servant was allowed to depart unharmed; a boy who was in the carriage was removed that he might not be injured; and the unhappy gentleman was shot with all the deliberation and the calmness with which a man would be made to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. It is clear, then, that the ordinary law

fails, and that the Government have a case for the demand they make for an extension of the present powers of the law.

I do not say the present Bill will certainly be effective, but it is the less to be opposed because it does not greatly exceed or infringe the ordinary law; and it is the duty of the Legislature, when called upon to strengthen the Executive, to do so by the smallest possible infringement of the law and the constitution. But, to leave the particular measure now before us, I am bound to say that the case of the Government with respect to their Irish policy in general is not as good as could be wished. The Government has not shown the courage which is necessary to deal effectually with the difficulties of Ireland. They should remember what passed when the Poor-law was proposed for that country. They were told it would be a failure—that it could not be worked; but disregarding these statements, they passed the Bill; and I believe, since the Act of 1829, no measure has passed this House of equal benefit to Ireland. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has said that all parties are to be blamed for the misgovernment of Ireland; but he should remember the responsibility which is upon him, for he is now in the position of dictator on Irish questions, and whatever he proposes for that country, I verily believe, will find no successful opposition in this House.

There is another fact to which I would call attention. The Irish Members complain, and very justly, of the past legislation of this House; but when we call to mind that there are 105 of them here, of whom 60 or 70 are of Liberal politics or opinions, and that about 30 of them are Repealers, and hold very strong views with regard to the mismanagement of Irish affairs in the Imperial Parliament, I think we have a right to complain that they have not laid on the table of the House any one measure which they believe to be necessary to the prosperity of their country.

I have been in this House more than four years, and I

have never yet seen the Irish Members bringing forward any proposition of a practical character—nor am I aware that they have supported any measure they deemed necessary for Ireland, with unanimity and earnestness, or with anything like perseverance and resolution. I am sure that 105, or even 30 English Members, sitting in a Parliament in Dublin, and believing their country had suffered from the effects of bad legislation, would, by their knowledge of the case, their business habits, activity, union, and perseverance, have showed a powerful front, and by uniting together, and working manfully in favour of any proposition they might think necessary to remedy the evils of which they complained, they would have forced it on the attention of the House. But the Irish Members have not done this. So far then, they are and have been as much to blame as any other Member of this House for the absence of good government in Ireland.

I will not, like them, complain of bad legislation, and propose no remedy. What is the condition of Ireland? Last year we voted millions to keep its population from starvation; and this year we have been asked for a further sum, but have not granted it. We maintain a large army in Ireland, and an armed police, which is an army in everything but in name, and yet we have in that country a condition of things which is not to be matched in any other civilised country on the face of the earth, and which is alike disgraceful to Ireland and to us. The great cause of Ireland's calamities is, that Ireland is idle. I believe it would be found, on inquiry, that the population of Ireland, as compared with that of England, do not work more than two days per week. Wherever a people are not industrious and are not employed, there is the greatest danger of crime and outrage. Ireland is idle, and therefore she starves; Ireland starves, and therefore she rebels. We must choose between industry and anarchy: we must have one or the other in Ireland. This proposition I believe to be incontrovertible, and I defy the House to give peace and prosperity

to that country until they set in motion her industry, create and diffuse capital, and thus establish those gradations of rank and condition by which the whole social fabric can alone be held together.

But the idleness of the people of Ireland is not wholly their fault. It is for the most part a forced idleness, for it is notorious that when the Irish come to England, or remove to the United States or the Colonies, they are about the hardest working people in the world. We employ them down in Lancashire, and with the prospect of good pay they work about as well, and are as trustworthy, and quiet, and well-disposed to the law as the people of this country. The great secret of their idleness at home is, that there is little or no trade in Ireland; there are few flourishing towns to which the increasing population can resort for employment, so that there is a vast mass of people living on the land; and the land itself is not half so useful for their employment and sustentation as it might be. A great proportion of her skill, her strength, her sinews, and her labour, is useless to Ireland for the support of her population. Every year they have a large emigration, because there are a great number of persons with just enough means to transport themselves to other countries, who, finding it impossible to live at home in comfort, carry themselves and their capital out of Ireland; so that, year after year, she loses a large portion of those between the very poorest and the more wealthy classes of society, and with them many of the opportunities for the employment of labour.

I do not believe that the Bill for regulating the relations of landlord and tenant, as recommended by the hon. Member for the County of Limerick, will restore prosperity to Ireland. Such a measure may be passed with great advantage; but if it be intended by a Bill with this title to vest the ownership of the land in the present occupiers, I believe this House will never pass it, and if it did, that it would prove most fatal to the

best interests of the country. I think we have a right to blame the Government that as yet we have not seen the Bill for the sale of encumbered estates in Ireland. I wish to ask why such a Bill is not ready before this? [Lord John Russell: 'The Bill has been ready a long time.'] The noble Lord says the Bill has been ready long ago; but that statement only makes the Government open to greater blame, for if the Bill is ready, why has it not been brought forward before this? Last Session the Bill was withdrawn, and the reason given was that landlords and mortgagees did not like it. If the Government wait till the landlords and mortgagees like it, it will never be brought forward at all. Had they waited till the Irish landlords asked for the Poor-law, there would have been no Poor-law in Ireland now.

The Government should disregard the opposition of these parties, and should take their stand above all class interests. They must refuse to listen to the interested suggestions of one class or the other, and they must remember that they are the Executive Government of the country, and bound to act for the public good. There is an unanimous admission now that the misfortunes of Ireland are connected with the question of the management of the land. I have a theory that, in England as well as in Ireland, the proprietors of the soil are chiefly responsible for whatever bad legislation has been inflicted upon us. The ownership of land confers more political power than the possession of any other description of property. The Irish landowners have been willing parties to the past legislation for Ireland, and they have also had the administration and execution of the laws in that country. The encumbered condition of landed property in Ireland is at this moment the most pressing question. I am informed by a gentleman in Dublin, of the best means of information and of undoubted veracity, that in the province of Connaught there is not five per cent. of the land free from settlements of one kind or other, and that probably not one

per cent. is free from mortgages. I have asked Irish Members of all parties if this be true, and not one of them is disposed to deny it; and if it be true, I say it is idle to seek elsewhere for the source of the evils of Ireland; and every day, nay, every hour we allow to go by without taking instant measures to remedy this crying mischief, only adds to the criminality which rests on us for our past legislation.

Patchwork legislation will not now succeed; speeches from the Lord Lieutenant—articles in the newspapers—lending to the landowners at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. money raised by taxation from the traders of England, who have recently been paying 8 per cent.—all will fail to revive the industry of Ireland. I will now state what, in my opinion, is the remedy, and I beg to ask the attention of the Government to it, because, though they may now think it an extreme one, I am convinced that the time will come when they will be compelled to adopt it.

In the first place, it is their duty to bring in a Sale of Estates Bill, and make it easy for landowners who wish to dispose of their estates to do so. They should bring in a Bill to simplify the titles to land in Ireland. I understand that it is almost impossible to transfer an estate now, the difficulties in the way of a clear title being almost insurmountable. In the next place, they should diminish temporarily, if not permanently, all stamp duties which hinder the transfer of landed property, and they should pass a law by which the system of entailing estates should for the future be prevented. [Laughter.] I can assure hon. Gentlemen who laugh at this, that at some not distant day this must be done, and not in Ireland only, but in England also. It is an absurd and monstrous system, for it binds, as it were, the living under the power of the dead.

The principle on which the law should proceed is this, that the owner of property should be permitted to leave it to whomsoever he will, provided the individual is living when the will

is made; but he should not be suffered, after he is dead, and buried, and forgotten, to speak and still to direct the channel through which the estate should pass. I shall be told that the law of entail in Ireland is the same as in England, and that in Scotland it is even more strict. I admit it; but the evil is great in England, and in Scotland it has become intolerable, and must soon be relaxed if not abolished. Perhaps I shall be told that the laws of entail and primogeniture are necessary for the maintenance of our aristocratic institutions; but if the evils of Ireland spring from this source, I say, perish your aristocratic institutions rather than that a whole nation should be in this terrible condition. If your aristocratic families would rear up their children in habits of business, and with some notions of duty and prudence, these mischievous arrangements would not be required, and they would retain in their possession estates at least as large as is compatible with the interests of the rest of the community. If the laws of entail and primogeniture are sound and just, why not apply them to personal property as well as to freehold? Imagine them in force in the middle classes of the community, and it will be seen at once that the unnatural system, if universal, would produce confusion; and confusion would necessitate its total abolition.

I am thoroughly convinced that everything the Government or Parliament can do for Ireland will be unavailing, unless the foundation of the work be laid well and deep, by clearing away the fetters under which land is now held, so that it may become the possession of real owners, and be made instrumental to the employment and sustentation of the people. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may fancy themselves interested in maintaining the present system; but there is surely no interest they can have in it which they will weigh against the safety and prosperity of Ireland? I speak as a representative from a county which suffers extremely from the condition of Ireland. Lancashire is periodically overrun by the

pauperism of Ireland; for a year past it has suffered most seriously from the pestilence imported from Ireland; and many of the evils which in times past have been attributed to the extension of manufactures in that county have arisen from the enormous immigration of a suffering and pauperized people driven for sustenance from their own country.

As a Lancashire representative, I protest most solemnly against a system which drives the Irish population to seek work and wages in this country and in other countries, when both might be afforded them at home. Parliament is bound to remedy this state of things. The present Parliament contains a larger number of men of business and of members representing the middle classes than any former Parliament. The present Government is essentially of the middle class—[a laugh]—and its Members have on many occasions shown their sympathy with it. Let the hon. Gentleman laugh; but he will not deny that no Government can long have a majority in this House which does not sympathise with the great middle class of this country. If the Government will manfully and courageously grapple with the question of the condition of land in Ireland, they will, I am convinced, be supported by a majority of the Members of this House, they will enable the strength and skill of Irishmen to be expended on their own soil, and lay the foundation of her certain prosperity by giving that stimulus and reward to industry which it cannot have in the present circumstances of that country. Sir, I feel it impossible to refuse my vote in favour of the Bill now before us; but I am compelled to say, that unless the Government will zealously promote measures in the direction I have indicated, they cannot hope long to retain the confidence of this House or of the country.

# IRELAND.

## III.

### EMPLOYMENT OF THE POOR.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, AUGUST 25, 1848.

From the speeches that have been delivered in this debate, and from what we know of Ireland, it is clear that Ireland is so entirely disorganised, that it is extremely difficult to suggest any means by which relief can be extensively given without causing two evils: first, the waste of a great portion of the money which is granted; and next, the demoralization of a large number of those to whom the relief is given. It is on account of these difficulties that I am disposed to make great allowance for the measures which the Government have undertaken, as well as for any propositions which may be made by the hon. Member for Stroud, even when they appear somewhat inconsistent with correct economical principles.

As this is probably the last opportunity during this Session when the question of the condition of Ireland can be discussed, I am anxious to avail myself of it to offer a few observations to the House, and to explain briefly what I conceive to be the course which ought to be taken with regard to that country, to enable its population to place themselves

in a position of comfort and independence. The past of Ireland is known to us all; it is a tale of idleness, and poverty, and periodical insurrection; the present of Ireland is like the past, except that at this moment all its ordinary evils are exhibited in an aggravated form. But there are one or two points with regard to this subject to which I wish especially to ask the attention of the House. Have you ever fully considered the effect which this state of things in Ireland has upon the condition of certain districts in England? We have had some threatenings of disturbances in England, and of disaffection—I hope it is not wide-spread—here and there in various parts of the country. Take the county of Lancaster as an example, and you will see something of the consequences of a large influx of the Irish population into that district. In Liverpool and Manchester, and in all the belt of towns which surround Manchester, there is a large Irish population—in fact, there is an Irish quarter in each of these towns. It is true that a great number of these persons are steady, respectable, and industrious, but it is notorious that a portion of them are, in some degree, the opposite of all this. They bring to this country all the vices which have prevailed so long in Ireland; their influence on the people of Lancashire is often of an unfavourable character, and the effect of their example on the native population must necessarily be injurious. We find that crimes attended with violence prevail too generally in Lancashire and Yorkshire. These crimes to a large extent are committed by persons who are not natives of those counties, but who come from Ireland, because it is impossible for them to find subsistence in that country.

There is another point which seems to me important. Driven forth by poverty, Irishmen emigrate in great numbers, and in whatever quarter of the world an Irishman sets his foot, there stands a bitter, an implacable enemy of England. That is one of the results of the wide-spread disaffection that exists in Ireland. There are hundreds of thousands—I suppose

there are millions—of the population of the United States of America who are Irish by birth, or by immediate descent; and be it remembered, Irishmen settled in the United States have a large influence in public affairs. They sometimes sway the election of Members of the Legislature, and may even affect the election of the President of the Republic. There may come a time when questions of a critical nature will be agitated between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States; and it is certain that at such a time the Irish in that country will throw their whole weight into the scale against this country, and against peace with this country. These are points which it is necessary to consider, and which arise out of the lamentable condition in which Ireland is placed.

When we reflect for a moment upon the destitution which millions of our countrymen suffer in that unfortunate island, the conclusion is inevitable that either the Government or the people of Ireland are in fault. I think both are in fault. I think the Government has been negligent of Ireland. I do not mean the present Government in particular; for they are fully as anxious for the welfare of Ireland as any former Administration has been—but I think the Government generally has been negligent of Ireland. It is a common thing to hear it said, and especially by Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench, that the remedy for Irish evils is difficult, and that the difficulty seems insurmountable; but the House may rest assured that no difficulty can be so great as that which must be met if no remedy is applied. To do anything that can be effectual, must be infinitely less dangerous than to do nothing.

Now I believe the real difficulties which beset this question do not arise from anything in Ireland, so much as from the constitution of the Government. This House, and the other House of Parliament, are almost exclusively aristocratic in their character. The Administration is therefore necessarily the same, and on the Treasury benches aristocracy reigns

supreme. No fewer than seven Members of the Cabinet are Members of the House of Lords; and every other Member of it is either a Lord by title, or on the very threshold of the peerage by birth or marriage. I am not blaming them for this; it may even be that from neither House of Parliament can fourteen better men be chosen to fill their places. But I maintain that in the present position of Ireland, and looking at human nature as it is, it is not possible that fourteen Gentlemen, circumstanced as they are, can meet round the Council table, and with unbiassed minds fairly discuss the question of Ireland, as it now presents itself to this House, to the country, and to the world.

The condition of Ireland requires two kinds of remedies—one political, the other social; and it is hard to tell where the one ends and the other begins. I will speak first of the political remedies. At present, there prevails throughout three-fourths of the Irish people a total unbelief in the honesty and integrity of the Government of this country. There may or may not be good grounds for all this ill feeling; but that it exists, no man acquainted with Ireland will deny. The first step to be taken is to remove this feeling; and, to do this, some great measure or measures should be offered to the people of Ireland, which will act as a complete demonstration to them that bygones are to be bygones, with regard to the administration of Irish affairs, and that henceforth new, generous, and equal principles of government are to be adopted.

I have on a former occasion stated my opinions on one or two subjects, and I will venture again briefly to explain them to the House. Ireland has long been a country of jars and turmoil, and its jars have arisen chiefly from religious dissensions. In respect of matters of religion she has been governed in a manner totally unknown in England and Scotland. If Ireland has been rightly governed—if it has been wise and just to maintain the Protestant Church established there, you

ought, in order to carry out your system, to establish Prelacy in Scotland, and Catholicism in England; though, if you were to attempt to do either the one or the other, it would not be a sham but a real insurrection that you would provoke. There must be equality between the great religious sects in Ireland —between Catholic and Protestant. It is impossible that this equality can be much longer denied.

It is suspected that it is the intention of the Government to bring forward at no distant day, if they can catch the people of England napping, a proposition for paying the Roman Catholic priests of Ireland. On more than one ground I should object to any such scheme. In the first place, I believe the Government cannot, from any funds they possess, or from any they can obtain, place the Catholic priests on an equality with the ministers of the Protestant Church; and if they cannot do that in every respect, the thing is not worth attempting. They will, I think, find it infinitely more easy, and it will certainly be much more in accordance with political justice, and with the true interests of religion, to withdraw from Ireland the Church Establishment which now exists there, and to bring about the perfect equality which may be secured by taking away so much of the funds as are proved to be totally unnecessary for the wants of the population. I do not mean that you should withdraw from the Protestant Church every sixpence now in its possession; what I mean is, that you should separate it from the State, and appropriate all the funds of which it might justly be deprived to some grand national object, such as the support and extension of the system of education now established in Ireland; an appropriation of money which would, I am sure, produce in the minds of the people of Ireland an entire change of feeling with regard to the legislation of Parliament in relation to their country.

With regard to the Parliamentary representation of Ireland, having recently spent seventy-three days in an examination

of the subject, whilst serving as a Member of the Dublin Election Committee, I assert most distinctly that the representation which exists at this moment is a fraud; and I believe it would be far better if there were no representation at all, because the people would not then be deluded by the idea that they had a representative Government to protect their interests. The number of taxes which the people have to pay, in order to secure either the municipal or Parliamentary franchise, is so great that it is utterly impossible for the constituencies to be maintained, and for public opinion—the honest, real opinion of intelligent classes in Ireland—to obtain any common or decent degree of representation in the Imperial Legislature. I feel quite confident that in the next Session of Parliament, the questions of religious equality in Ireland and of Irish representation must receive a much more serious attention than they have obtained in any past Session.

I come now to those social questions which must also receive the attention of Parliament; for if they do not, the political remedies will, after all, be of very little permanent use. I advocate these political changes on the ground, not that they will feed the hungry or employ the idle, but that they will be as oil thrown upon the waters, and will induce the people no longer to feel themselves treated as a conquered race. It is agreed on all sides that the social remedies which are immediately possible to us, are those having reference to the mode in which the land of Ireland is owned, or held and cultivated—perhaps 'not cultivated' would be a more correct expression. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has alluded to parts of Ireland in which it is impossible that the land as at present held, or the rates which can be collected, can find relief or sustentation for the people. It is a notorious fact, that there are vast tracts of land in Ireland, which, if left in the hands of nominal and bankrupt owners, will never to the end of time support the population which ought to live upon them. And it is on this ground that I must question

the policy of measures for expending public money with a view to the cultivation and reclamation of these lands.

The true solution of this matter is to get the lands out of the hands of men who are the nominal, and not the real, possessors. But Parliament maintains laws which act most injuriously in this particular. The law and practice of entails tends to keep the soil in large properties, and in the hands of those who cannot perform their duty to it. It will be said that entails exist in Scotland and in England. Yes; but this Session a law has passed, or is passing, to modify the system as it has heretofore existed in Scotland; and in England many of its evils have been partially overcome by the extraordinary, and, to some degree, the accidental extension of manufacturing industry among the people. In Ireland there are no such mitigations; a code of laws exists, under which it is impossible for the land and the people to be brought, as it were, together, and for industry to live in independence and comfort, instead of crawling to this House, as it does almost annually, to ask alms of the hardworking people of England.

The law and practice of primogeniture is another evil of the same character. It is a law unnatural and unjust at all times; but in the present condition of Ireland it cannot much longer be endured. Were I called upon—and it is a bold figure of speech to mention such a thing—but were I called upon to treat this Irish question, I would establish, for a limited period at least, a special court in Ireland to adjudicate on all questions connected with the titles and transfers of landed property. This court should finally decide questions of title; it should prepare and enforce a simple and short form of conveyance, as short almost as that by which railway stock is transferred; and, without regard to the public revenue, I would abolish every farthing of expense which is now incurred in the duties on stamps, for the purpose of facilitating the distribution of land in Ireland, and of

allowing the capital and industry of the people to work out its salvation. All this is possible; and, more than this, it is all necessary. Well, now, what is the real obstacle in our path? You have toiled at this Irish difficulty Session after Session, and some of you have grown almost from boyhood to grey-headed old men since it first met you in your legislative career, and yet there is not in ancient or modern history a picture so humiliating as that which Ireland presents to the world at this moment; and there is not an English gentleman who, if he crossed the Channel in the present autumn, and travelled in any foreign country, would not wish to escape from any conversation among foreigners in which the question of the condition of Ireland was mooted for a single moment.

Let the House, if it can, regard Ireland as an English country. Let us think of the eight millions of people, and of the millions of them doomed to this intolerable suffering. Let us think of the half-million who, within two years past, have perished miserably in the workhouses, and on the highways, and in their hovels—more, far more than ever fell by the sword in any war this country ever waged; let us think of the crop of nameless horrors which is even now growing up in Ireland, and whose disastrous fruit may be gathered in years and generations to come. Let us examine what are the laws and the principles under which alone God and nature have permitted that nations should become industrious and provident.

I hope the House will pardon me if I have said a word that can offend any one. But I feel conscious of a personal humiliation when I consider the state of Ireland. I do not wish to puff nostrums of my own, though it may be thought I am opposed to much that exists in the present order of things; but whether it tended to advance democracy, or to uphold aristocracy, or any other system, I would wish to fling to the winds any prejudice I have entertained, and any

principle that may be questioned, if I can thereby do one single thing to hasten by a single day the time when Ireland shall be equal to England in that comfort and that independence which an industrious people may enjoy, if the Government under which they live is equal and just.

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# IRELAND.

## IV.

### RATE IN AID.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 2, 1849.

[On February 7, 1849, a proposal was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that a sum of 50,000*l.* should be granted to certain Irish Unions, in which distress was more than usually prevalent. The resolution was passed on March 3. On March 27 the second reading of the Bill founded on this resolution was moved, and the debate continued till April 3, when the second reading was affirmed by 193 votes to 138. The third reading was carried by 129 to 55, on April 30. The Bill passed the House of Lords on May 18.]

I VENTURED to move the adjournment of the debate on Friday night, because I was anxious to have the opportunity of expressing the opinions which I entertain on this most important subject. I am one of the Committee appointed by this House to inquire into the working of the Irish poor-law, and on that Committee I was one of the majority—the large majority—by which the resolution for a rate in aid was affirmed. In the division which took place on the same proposition in the House, I also voted in the majority. But I am not by any means disposed to say that there are no reasons against the course which I take, or against the proposition which has been submitted to the House by the

Government. On the whole, however, I am prepared to-night to justify that proposition, and the vote which I have given for it.

As to the project of raising money for the purpose of these distressed Unions, I think there can be no doubt in the mind of any Member of the House, that money must come from some quarter. It appears to be a question of life or money. All the witnesses who were examined before the Committee; the concurrent testimony of all parties in Ireland, of all the public papers, of all the speeches which have been delivered in the course of this debate, go to prove, that unless additional funds be provided, tens of thousands of our unfortunate fellow-countrymen in Ireland must perish of famine in the course of the present year. If this be true, it is evident that a great necessity is upon us; a grave emergency, which we must meet. I am not prepared to justify the proposition of a rate in aid merely on the ground of this necessity, because it will be said, and justly, that the same amount of funds might be raised by some other mode; but I am prepared to justify the proposition which restricts this rate in aid to Ireland, on the ground that the rest of the United Kingdom has, during the past three years, paid its own rate in aid for Ireland; and this to a far larger amount than any call which the Government now proposes to make on the rateable property in Ireland.

We have taken from the general taxation of this country, in the last two or three years, for the purposes of Ireland, several millions, I may say not fewer than from eight to ten millions sterling. We have paid also very large subscriptions from private resources, to the same purpose; the sums expended by the British Association were not less, in the aggregate, than 600,000*l.*, in addition to other large amounts contributed. The Irish, certainly, gave something to these funds; but by far the larger amount was paid by the tax-paying classes of Great Britain. In addition to this special

outlay for this purpose, very heavy local taxation has been incurred by several of the great communities of this island, for the purpose of supporting the pauperism which has escaped from Ireland to Great Britain. In this metropolis, in Glasgow, in Liverpool, and in the great manufacturing town which I have the honour to represent, the overflow of Irish pauperism has, within the last two or three years more especially, occasioned a vast additional burden of taxation. I believe the hon. Member for South Lancashire made some statement in this House on a former occasion with respect to the burden which was inflicted upon Liverpool by the Irish paupers, who constantly flow into that town. As to Glasgow, the poor-rate levied last year in the city parish alone, amounted to 70,000*l.*; and this year, owing to the visitation of cholera and the poverty thereby engendered, there will be an additional assessment of 20,000*l.* The city parish contains only about 120,000 or 130,000 of the 280,000 residents in the mass of buildings known by the general name of Glasgow. Of the sum levied as poor-rate in the city parish, it is estimated that, on an average, two-thirds are spent upon Irish paupers. The ranks of these Irish paupers are recruited to a comparatively small extent from the Irish workmen, who have been, with their families, attracted by, and who have found employment in, the numerous manufactories of Glasgow. The Irish paupers, upon whom two-thirds of the Glasgow poor-rates are spent, are principally squalid and destitute creatures who are brought over as deck passengers, clustering like bees to the bulwarks and rigging, by almost every steamer that sails from a northern Irish port. With respect to the town of Manchester, I am able to give some more definite particulars as to the burthen imposed upon the inhabitants for the support of the Irish casual poor. In the year 1848, the sum expended in the relief of the settled poor, which term includes the resident Irish who are not distinguished by name from the English, amounted to 37,847*l.*

The sum expended for the relief of the non-settled English paupers in the town of Manchester, in the year 1848, was 18,699*l.* The amount expended for the relief of casual Irish poor alone was 28,007*l.* The total assessment of Manchester is 647,568*l.*, which, if divided by the amount required to relieve the casual Irish poor, would amount to a rate of 10½*d.* in the pound upon every pound of rateable property in the town of Manchester; but if estimated according to the property really rated (as there are great numbers of persons who, from poverty, do not pay the poor-rates on the property they occupy), the amount of assessment for the relief of the casual Irish poor alone will be from 15*d.* to 18*d.* in the pound, and the charge upon the ratepayers of Manchester for the relief of the Irish casual poor during the last year is not less than 2*s.* 1*d.* per head upon the whole population of that town.

Now, during the last year, Manchester had to struggle with very severe difficulties, and the manufacturers there suffered most acutely from various causes. The failure of the cotton crop of 1846, the panic in the financial and commercial world in 1847, the convulsions in the European States in 1848—all these contributed to bring upon Manchester enormous evil; and in addition to this we had to bear an additional burden of 28,000*l.* for the maintenance of the casual Irish poor. I have here an analysis of the poor-rates collected in Manchester during the last four years, and I will briefly state the results to the House. In the year 1845 the amount of rates collected expressly for the relief of the casual Irish poor was 3,500*l.* In 1846 the cost of the casual Irish poor imposed a burden upon Manchester of 3,300*l.*; in 1847 of 6,558*l.*; and in 1848 this item of expenditure reached the extraordinary sum of 28,007*l.* The people of Manchester have uttered no loud or clamorous complaints respecting the excessive burden borne by them for the support of the Irish. They have sent no urgent deputations to the Government on

the subject of this heavy expense. But, seeing that they have paid this money for the relief of Irish paupers, and seeing also that the smaller manufacturing and other towns in England have also paid no small sums for Irish paupers, they do think, and I here express my conviction, that it will be seen and admitted that we have paid our rate in aid for the relief of Ireland, and that it does become the landowners and persons of property in that country to make an effort during a temporary period to supply that small sum which is by this Bill demanded of them.

I will now say a few words regarding the province of Ulster. An hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Londonderry, who made a not very civil speech, so far as it regarded persons who entertain the same opinions generally which I profess, seemed to allege that there was no party so tyrannical as those who wished to carry this rate in aid, and that no body of men on earth were so oppressed as the unfortunate proprietors of Ulster. [Mr. Bateson: 'The farmers of Ulster.'] I have made a calculation, the result of which is, that, with the population of Ulster, a 6*d.* rate would be 82,000*l.* a-year, or 164,000*l.* for the two years during which they will be required to pay towards the support of their fellow-countrymen in the south and west. If I were an Ulster proprietor, I would not have raised my voice against such a proposition, because it is not a state of things of an ordinary character, nor are these proprietors called on to do that which nobody else has done before them. Neither were they called upon before other sources had been applied to. Had I been an Ulster proprietor, I would rather have left this House than have taken the course they have pursued in denouncing this measure. As to the farmers of Ulster, they would not have raised this opposition had they not been instigated to do so by hon. Members in this House, and by the proprietors in that province, whom they represented. It appears by the

reports of the inspectors under the poor-law, that where there has been a difficulty in collecting rates, and the people have refused to pay, they have followed the example of the higher and landlord class; and the conduct of that class in many cases has been such as to render the collection extremely difficult. [Mr. Bateson: 'Not in Ulster.'] I do not speak of Ulster particularly in this instance, but the case has occurred in other places; but happily for Ulster the burden has not proved so serious in that province.

I have heard a good deal said respecting the resignation of Mr Twisleton, who preferred giving up his situation to supporting the rate in aid. But the reasons assigned by Mr. Twisleton destroy the importance of his own act. He did not insist upon the question whether Ulster was able to bear the rate in aid; but his objection was that Ulster was Ulster, and more Ulster than it was Ireland. He said Ulster preferred being united with England, rather than with Leinster, Connaught, and Munster; in short, that Ulster was unwilling to be made a part of Ireland. Now, if this Bill can succeed in making Ulster a part of Ireland in interests and sympathies, I think it will be attended with a very happy result, and one that will compensate for some portion of the present misfortunes of Ireland.

But the hon. Member also, in another part of his speech, charged the Government with having caused the calamities of Ireland. Now, if I were the hon. Member, I would not have opened up that question. My opinion is, that the course which Parliament has taken with respect to Ireland for upwards of a century, and especially since the Union, has been in accordance with the wishes of the proprietors of the land of that country. If, therefore, there has been misgovernment in Ireland during that period, it is the land which has influenced Parliament, and the landowners are responsible. I do not mean to say that the House of Commons is not responsible for taking the evil advice which the landowners

of Ireland have proffered; but what I mean to assert is, that this advice has been almost invariably acted upon by the Government. This it is which has proved fatal to the interests of Ireland; the Ulster men have stood in the way of improvements in the Franchise, in the Church, and in the Land question; they have purchased Protestant ascendancy, and the price paid for it is the ruin and degradation of their country. So much for the vote which I am about to give in support of the rate in aid.

In the next place, I must observe that if an income tax were to be substituted for a rate in aid, I think I could show substantial reasons why it would not be satisfactory. In the first place, I take an objection to the imposition of an income tax for the express purpose of supporting paupers. This, I apprehend, is a fatal objection at the outset. I understand that there has been a document issued by a Committee in another place, which has reported favourably for the substitution of an income tax in lieu of the rate in aid. I always find that if a proposition is brought forward by the Government to impose a new tax, it is always for a tax which is disliked, and I conclude, that if an income tax for Ireland had been proposed instead of the rate in aid, that would have been repudiated with quite as much vigour as the proposition now before the House.

And now I will address a few words to the general question of Ireland, which I think may be fairly entered upon in this debate after the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. What have we been doing all the Session? With the exception of the Jewish Oaths Bill, and the Navigation Laws, our attention has been solely taken up with Irish matters. From the incessant recurrence of the Irish debate, it would seem, either that the wrongs and evils endured by the Irish people are incurable, or else that we lack statesmen. I always find that, whoever happens to sit on the other side of the table, he always has some scheme to

propose for the regeneration of Ireland. The noble Lord on the Treasury bench had his schemes for that purpose when he was seated opposite. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth now has his scheme to propose, and if he can succeed in it, he will not only have the universal wish of the nation in his favour, but the noble Lord also who is at the head of the Government will not, I am sure, object to give way to any man who will settle the Irish question. But the treatment of this Irish malady remains ever the same. We have nothing for it still but force and alms. You have an armed force there of 50,000 men to keep the people quiet, large votes are annually required to keep the people quiet, and large votes are annually required to keep the people alive. I presume the government by troops is easy, and that the

> 'Civil power may move at ease,
> While soldiers fire to keep the peace.'

But the noble Lord at the head of the Government has no policy to propose for Ireland. If he had, he would have told us what it is before now. The poor-law as a means of regenerating Ireland is a delusion. So is the rate in aid. I do not believe in the regenerating power either of the poor-law or of the rate in aid. There may occur cases where farmers will continue to employ labourers for the mere purpose of preventing them from coming on the poor-rates, but these are exceptions. If the desire of gain will not cause the employment of capital, assuredly poor-rates will not. A poor-law adds to pauperism, by inviting to idleness. It drags down the man who pays, and demoralises him who receives. It may expose, it may temporarily relieve, it will increase, but it can never put an end to pauperism. The poor-law and the rate in aid are, therefore, utterly unavailing for such a purpose.

It is the absence of all demand for labour that constitutes the real evil of Ireland. In the distressed Unions a man's

labour is absolutely worth nothing. It is not that the Irish people will not work. I spoke to an Irish navigator the other day respecting his work, and I asked him why his countrymen did not work in their own country. 'Give them 2*s*. 8*d*. a-day,' said he, 'and you will find plenty who will work.' There exists in Ireland a lamentable want of employment. The land there enjoys a perpetual sabbath. If the people of Ireland were set to work, they would gain their subsistence; but if this course is not adopted, they must either continue to be supported out of the taxes, or else be left to starve. In order to show how great is the general poverty in Ireland, I will read a statement of the comparative amount of legacy duty paid in the two countries. In England, in the year 1844, the amount of capital on which legacy duty was paid was 44,393,887*l*.; in Ireland, in 1845, the amount of capital on which legacy duty was paid was 2,140,021*l*.—the population of the latter being nearly one-half of the former, whilst the proportion between the capital paying legacy duty is only one-twentieth. In 1844, the legacy duty paid in England was 1,124,435*l*., with a population of 16,000,000; in Scotland it was 74,116*l*., with a population of 3,000,000; whilst Ireland paid only 53,618*l*., with a population of 8,000,000. These facts offer the strongest possible proof of the poverty of Ireland.

On looking over the reports of the Poor-law Inspectors, I find them teeming with statements of the wretchedness which prevails in the distressed districts of Ireland. The general character of the reports is, that starvation is, literally speaking, gradually driving the population into their graves. The people cannot quit their hovels for want of clothing, whilst others cannot be discharged from the workhouses owing to the same cause. Men are seen wearing women's apparel, not being able to procure proper clothing; whilst, in other instances, men, women, and children are all huddled together under bundles of rags, unable to rise for

lack of covering; workhouses and prisons are crowded beyond their capacity to contain, the mortality being very great in them. Persons of honest character commit thefts in order to be sent to prison, and some ask, as a favour, to be transported.

I know of nothing like this in the history of modern times. The only parallel I can find to it is in the work of the great German author (Mosheim), who, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, speaking of the inroads of the barbarians into the Roman empire in the fifth century, says that in Gaul, the calamities of the times drove many to such madness, that they wholly excluded God from the government of the world, and denied His providence over human affairs. It would almost appear that this state of things is now to be seen in Ireland. The prisons are crowded, the chapels deserted, society is disorganised and ruined; labour is useless, for capital is not to be had for its employment. The reports of the Inspectors say that this catastrophe has only been hastened, and not originated, by the failure of the potato crop during the last four years, and that all men possessed of any intelligence must have foreseen what would ultimately happen.

This being the case, in what manner are the Irish people to subsist in future? There is the land, and there is labour enough to bring it into cultivation. But such is the state in which the land is placed, that capital cannot be employed upon it. You have tied up the raw material in such a manner—you have created such a monopoly of land by your laws and your mode of dealing with it, as to render it alike a curse to the people and to the owners of it. Why, let me ask, should land be tied up any more than any other raw material? If the supply of cotton wool were limited to the hands of the Browns and the Barings, what would be the condition of the Lancashire manufactories? What the manufactories would be under such a monopoly, the land in the county of

Mayo actually is under the system which prevails with respect to it in Ireland. But land carries with it territorial influence, which the Legislature will not interfere with lest it should be disturbed. Land is sacred, and must not be touched.

The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade will understand what I mean when I allude to the Land Improvement Company which the Legislature is ready to charter for Ireland, but which it fears to suffer to exist in England, lest the territorial influence which ever accompanies the possession of landed estates should be lost or diminished. But one of the difficulties to which a remedy must be applied is the defective titles, which cannot easily be got rid of under the present system of entails. This is one of the questions to which the House of Commons must very soon give its serious attention. Then there comes the question of settlements. Now, I do not say there ought not to be any settlements; but what I mean to say is, that they are so bound up and entangled with the system of entails as to present insuperable difficulties in the way of dealing with land as a marketable commodity. I have here an Opinion which I will read to the House, which I find recorded as having been given by an eminent counsel: it is quoted in Hayes' work on Conveyancing, and the Opinion was given on the occasion of a settlement on the marriage of a gentleman having a fee-simple estate:—

'The proposals extend to a strict settlement by the gentleman upon the first and other sons of the marriage. It will appear from the preceding observations, that where the relative circumstances are such as in the present case, a strict settlement of the gentleman's estate does not ordinarily enter into the arrangement, which begins and ends with his taking the lady's fortune, and imposing an equivalent pecuniary charge upon his estate (for her personal benefit). The proposals seldom go further, unless there is hereditary rank or title to be supported, or it is in contemplation to found a family. The former of those two circumstances do not exist in this case, and the latter would require the settlement of the bulk of the estates. The policy of such settlements is extremely questionable. It is difficult to refer them, in the absence of both the motives already indicated, to any rational principle. The present

possessor has absolute dominion, his character is known, his right unquestionable. He is asked to reduce himself to a mere tenant for life in favour of an unborn son, of whose character nothing can be predicted, and who, if he can be said to have any right, cannot possibly have a preferable right. At no very distant period the absolute dominion must be confided to somebody: and why should confidence be reposed in the unborn child rather than the living parent? Such a settlement has no tendency to protect or benefit the father, whose advantage and comfort ought first to be consulted. It does not shield him from the consequences of his own imprudence. On the contrary, if his expenditure should in any instance exceed his income, he—as a mere tenant for life—is in danger of being obliged to borrow on annuity, a process which, once begun, proceeds generally and almost necessarily to the exhaustion of the life income. The son may be an idiot or a spendthrift. He may be tempted to raise money by *post obit*. If to these not improbable results we add all the family feuds generated between the tenant for life and remainderman, in regard to the management and enjoyment by the former of that estate which was once his own, particularly with reference to cutting timber, the disadvantages of thus fettering the dominion will appear greatly to preponderate. At best, a settlement is a speculation; at worst, it is the occasion of distress, profligacy, and domestic discord, ending not unfrequently, as the Chancery Reports bear witness, in obstinate litigation, ruinous alike to the peace and to the property of the family. Sometimes the father effects an arrangement with his eldest son on his coming of age, the son stipulating for an immediate provision in the shape of an annuity, the father for a gross sum to satisfy his creditors, or to portion his younger children, and for a re-settlement of the estate. This arrangement, perhaps, is brought about by means, or imposes terms, which, in the eye of equity, render it a fraud upon the son, and here we have another source of litigation.'

Now, what I have here read is exactly that which everybody's experience tells us is the fact, and we have recently had a notable case which exactly answers to that referred to in the last paragraph of this Opinion. The practice of making settlements of this description is mischievous: leads to endless litigation—and sooner or later the landed classes must sink under it.

The Irish proprietors have also another difficulty to contend with, and that is their extravagance. It is said—for I cannot vouch for the fact myself—that they keep too many horses and dogs. I do not mean to say that an Irish gentleman may not spend his rents as he pleases; but I can say that he cannot both spend his money and have it too.

I think if they would cast their pride on one side, and go honestly to work—if, instead of their young men spending their time 'waiting for a commission,' they were to go into business, they would be far better and more usefully employed, and they would find that the less humiliating condition of the two. Another bane of Ireland is the prevalence of life interests in landed property there. Under such a system the land can neither be improved nor sold. Now what has the noble Lord at the head of the Government done towards grappling with all these questions? Nothing—absolutely nothing. I think him very unwise in not propounding to himself the momentous question, 'What shall be done for Ireland?' The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth has a plan. He entered upon its outline on Friday last. But I doubt whether it has yet taken that distinct form which it must assume in order that the House may take cognisance of it. I admire some of the measures which the right hon. Baronet intimates he would carry into effect, but there are other parts of his proposals which are vague and impracticable. I think, if it is believed in Ireland that a Commission is to be appointed to take charge of the distressed Unions of the south and west—that the whole thing is to be managed through a new department of the Government, and all without the slightest trouble to the landlords—that there will be more than ever a clinging to this wretched property in bankrupt estates, and more than ever an indisposition to adopt those measures which are still open to them, in the direction in which the right hon. Baronet wishes to proceed.

The right hon. Baronet stated in his first speech on this topic, that he did not wish the transfer of property to be by individual barter; and on Friday he stated that he was very much averse to allowing matters to go on in their natural course, for by that means land would be unnaturally cheapened. Well, but upon what conditions would the right hon.

Baronet buy land in Ireland? would it be under the same circumstances, and at the same price, that he would buy an estate in Yorkshire or Staffordshire? If any sane man goes to the west or south of Ireland to purchase an estate, he must go on account of the cheapness of the bargain—a cheapness which he hopes will compensate him for all the disadvantages to which he must necessarily be subjected in such a purchase. There can be no redemption for that part of Ireland—if it is to be through the transfer of land—except the land take its natural course, and come so cheap into the market that Englishmen and Scotchmen, and Irishmen too having capital, will be willing to purchase it, notwithstanding all its disadvantages. [Colonel Dunne: 'Hear, hear!'] The hon. Member for Portarlington cheers that, as if it were an extraordinary statement. If the hon. Member prefers purchasing what is dear to what is cheap, he is not a very sensible man to legislate for Ireland. If he thinks that a man will go into Galway and pay as much per acre for an estate as he would in England, he is greatly mistaken; but the fact is, I believe, that not only English and Scotch capital, but that much Irish capital also, would be expended in the purchase of estates in the south and west, if the ends which the right hon. Baronet has in view were facilitated by this House.

But we have a case in point which affords us some guidance upon this question, and it is a case with which the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, and the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon, are very familiar. I allude to the case of Stockport in 1842. Owing to a variety of circumstances—I will not go into the question of the Corn-law, as that is settled—but owing to a variety of circumstances, from 1838 to 1842 there was a continued sinking in the condition of Stockport—its property depreciated to a lamentable extent. One man left property, as he thought, worth 80,000*l.* or 90,000*l.* Within two years it sold for little more than 20,000*l.*

Since that time the son of one man, then supposed to be a person of large property, has had relief from the parochial funds. In 1842 the amount of the poor-rate averaged from 7*s.* to 8*s.* in the pound. From November 4, 1841, to May 30, 1842, the rates levied were 6*s.* in the pound, realising the amount of 19,144*l.* From January 28, 1843, to August 2 of the same year, the rates levied were 7*s.* in the pound, and the amount raised was 21,948*l.* And bear in mind that at that time Stockport was in process of depopulation—many thousands quitted the place—whole streets were left with scarcely a tenant in them—some public-houses, previously doing a large business, were let for little more than their rates; in fact, Stockport was as fair a representative of distress amongst a manufacturing community as Mayo, Galway, or any western county of Ireland can be at this moment of distress amongst an agricultural community.

Now what was done in Stockport? There was a Commission of Inquiry, which the then Home Secretary appointed. They made an admirable report, the last paragraph of which ought to be read by every one who wishes to know the character of the people of Stockport. Mr. Twisleton, speaking of them, said that they were a noble people; and truly the exertions which they made to avoid becoming chargeable upon the rates were heroic. Well now, all this suffering was going on—the workhouses were crowded, the people were emigrating, there was a general desolation, and if it had not been for the harvest of 1842, which was a good one, and the gradual recovery of trade which followed, nothing in Ireland can be worse than the condition of Stockport would have been. What was the result? Property was greatly depreciated, and much of it changed hands. Something like half the manufacturers failed, and, of course, gave up business altogether. My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport purchased property in the borough at that period, and since then he has laid out not far short of a hundred thousand pounds, in a very large manufacturing

establishment in that town. In fact, the persons who are now carrying on the manufacturing business in Stockport are of a more substantial character than those who were swept away by the calamities of 1842. This is a very sorrowful process. I can feel as much for those persons as any man; but we must all submit to circumstances such as these when they come.

There are vicissitudes in all classes of society, and in all occupations in which we may engage; and when we have, as now in Ireland, a state of things—a grievous calamity not equalled under the sun,—it is the duty of this House not to interfere with the ordinary and natural course of remedy, and not to flinch from what is necessary for the safety of the people by reason of any mistaken sympathy with the owners of cotton mills or with the proprietors of landed estates. Now, I want Parliament to remove every obstacle in the way of the free sale of land. I believe that in this policy lies the only security you have for the restoration of the distressed districts of Ireland. The question of a Parliamentary title is most important; but I understand that the difficulty of this arises from the system of entails beyond persons now living, and because you must go back through a long search of sixty years before you can make it quite clear that the title is absolutely secure. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth suggested that the Lord Chancellor should be ousted. I proposed last year that there should be a new court established in Ireland, for the adjudication of cases connected with land, and for no other purpose, and that it should thus relieve the present courts from much of the business with which they are now encumbered. But I do not say that even such a court would effect much good, unless it were very much more speedy in its operations than the existing courts. I believe that the present Lord Chancellor is admitted to be as good a Judge as ever sat in the Court of Chancery; but

he is rather timid as a Minister, and inert as a statesman; and, if I am not mistaken, he was in a great measure responsible for the failure of the Bill for facilitating the sale of encumbered estates last Session. The Government must have known, as well as I do, that such a measure could not succeed, and that the clause which was introduced —on the third reading, I believe—made it impossible to work it.

There is another point, with regard to intestate estates. I feel how tenderly one must speak, in this House, upon a question like this. Even the right hon. Member for Tamworth, with all his authority, appeared, when touching on this delicate question of the land, as if he were walking upon eggs which he was very much afraid of breaking. I certainly never heard the right hon. Gentleman steer through so many sinuosities in a case; and hardly, at last, dared he come to the question, because he was talking about land—this sacred land! I believe land to have nothing peculiar in its nature which does not belong to other property; and everything that we have done with the view of treating land differently from other property has been a blunder—a false course which we must retrace—an error which lies at the foundation of very much of the pauperism and want of employment which so generally prevail. Now, with regard to intestate estates, I am told that the House of Lords will never repeal the law of primogeniture; but I do not want them to repeal the law of primogeniture in the sense entertained by some people. I do not want them to enact the system of France, by which a division of property is compelled. I think that to force the division of property by law is just as contrary to sound principles and natural rights as to prevent its division, as is done by our law. If a man choose to act the unnatural and absurd part of leaving the whole of his property to one child, I should not, certainly, look with respect upon his memory; but I would not interfere to prevent the free exercise of his will.

I think, however, if a man die by chance without a will, that it is the duty of the Government to set a high moral example, and to divide the property equally among the children of the former owner, or among those who may be said to be his heirs—among those, in fact, who would fairly participate in his personal estate. If that system of leaving all to the eldest were followed out in the case of personalty, it would lead to immediate confusion, and, by destroying the whole social system, to a perfect anarchy of property. Why, then, should that course be followed with regard to land? The repeal of the law would not of necessity destroy the custom; but this House would no longer give its sanction to a practice which is bad; and I believe that gradually there would be a more just appreciation of their duties in this respect by the great body of testators.

Then, with regard to life interests; I would make an alteration there. I think that life-owners should be allowed to grant leases—of course, only on such terms as should ensure the successor from fraud—and that estates should be permitted to be charged with the sums which were expended in their improvement. Next, with regard to the registry of land. In many European countries this is done; and high legal authorities affirm that it would not be difficult to accomplish it in this country. You have your Ordnance Survey. To make the Survey necessary for a perfect registry of deeds throughout the kingdom, would not cost more than 9*d.* an acre; and if you had your plans engraved, it would be no great addition to the expense. There can be no reason why the landowners should not have that advantage conferred upon them, because, in addition to the public benefit, it would increase the value of their lands by several years' purchase. Mr. Senior has stated, that if there were the same ready means for the transfer of land as at present exist for the transfer of personalty, the value of land would be increased,

if I mistake not, by nine years' purchase. This is a subject which I would recommend to the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, now distinguished as the advocate of the landed interest.

Then with regard to stamps, I think that they might be reduced, at any rate for a number of years, to a nominal amount. In fact, I would make any sacrifice for the purpose of changing land from the hands of insolvent and embarrassed owners into those of solvent persons, who would employ it in a manner usefully and advantageously to the country and themselves. There is another proposition with regard to the waste lands of Ireland. The Government made a proposal last year for obtaining those waste lands, and bringing them into cultivation. That I thought injudicious. But they might take those lands at a valuation, and, dividing them into farms and estates of moderate size, might tempt purchasers from different parts of the United Kingdom. By such means I believe that a large proportion of the best of the waste lands might be brought into cultivation I believe that these are the only means by which capital can be attracted to that country.

The noble Lord at the head of the Government proposes to attract capital to Ireland by a maximum rate and a charge upon the Unions. If that maximum rate be all you have to propose, there will be no more probability of capital flowing into those parts of Ireland where it is so much required, than there was at the time when the poor-rate was unknown. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth spoke about emigration; and I think that he was rather unjust, or at least unwise, in his observations with regard to voluntary emigration. Things that are done voluntarily are not always done well; neither are things that are done by the Government; and I know many cases where Government undertakings have failed as eminently as any that have been attempted by private enterprise. But it does not appear to

me that there is much wisdom in the project of emigration, although I know that some hon. Gentlemen from Ireland place great faith in it as a remedy. I have endeavoured to ascertain what is the relation of the population to the land in Ireland, and this is what I find. In speaking of the Clifden Union, the Inspectors state—

'In conclusion, we beg to offer our matured opinion that the resources of the Union would, if made available, be amply sufficient for the independent support of its population.'

Mr. Hamilton, who was examined before the Committee of which I am a member, said, speaking of the Unions of Donegal and Glenties—

'There is no over-population, if these Unions, according to their capabilities, were cultivated as the average of English counties, with the same skill and capital.'

And Mr. Twisleton said—

'I did not speak of a redundant population in reference to land, only to capital. The land of Ireland could maintain double its present population.'

Then, if that be the case, I am not quite certain that we should be wise in raising sums of money to enable the people to emigrate. The cost of transporting a family to Australia, or even to Canada, is considerable; and the question is, whether, with the means which it would require to convey them to a distant shore, they might not be more profitably employed at home.

I probably shall be told that I propose schemes which are a great interference with the rights of property. My opinion is that nothing can be a greater interference and infringement of the rights of property than the laws which regulate property now. I think that the landowners are under an impression that they have been maintaining great influence, political power, an hereditary aristocracy, and all those other arrangements which some think should never be

named without reverence and awe; that they have been accustomed to look at these things, and to fancy that they are worth the price they pay for them. I am of opinion that the disadvantages under which those rights labour throughout the United Kingdom are extreme; but in Ireland the disadvantages are followed by results not known in this country.

You speak of interference with property; but I ask what becomes of the property of the poor man, which consists of his labour? Take those 4,000,000 persons who live in the distressed districts, as described by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. Their property in labour is almost totally destroyed. There they are—men whom God made and permitted to come into this world, endowed with faculties like ourselves, but who are unable to maintain themselves, and must either starve or live upon others. The interference with their property has been enormous—so great as absolutely to destroy it. Now, I ask the landlords of Ireland, whether living in the state in which they have lived for years is not infinitely worse than that which I have proposed for them? Threatening letters by the post at breakfast-time—now and then the aim of the assassin—poor-rates which are a grievous interference with the rights of property, and this rate in aid, which the gentlemen of Ulster declare to be directly opposed to all the rights of property—what can be worse?

I shall be told that I am injuring aristocratical and territorial influence. What is that in Ireland worth to you now? What is Ireland worth to you at all? Is she not the very symbol and token of your disgrace and humiliation to the whole world? Is she not an incessant trouble to your Legislature, and the source of increased expense to your people, already over-taxed? Is not your legislation all at fault in what it has hitherto done for that country? The people of Ulster say that we shall weaken the Union. It has been

one of the misfortunes of the legislation of this House that there has been no honest attempt to make a union with the whole people of Ireland up to this time. We have had a union with Ulster, but there has been no union with the whole people of Ireland, and there never can be a union between the Government and the people whilst such a state of things exists as has for many years past prevailed in the south and west of Ireland.

The condition of Ireland at this moment is this—the rich are menaced with ruin, and ruin from which, in their present course, they cannot escape; whilst the poor are menaced with starvation and death. There are hon. Gentlemen in this House, and there are other landed proprietors in Ireland, who are as admirable in the performance of all their social duties as any men to be found in any part of the world. We have had brilliant examples mentioned in this House; but those men themselves are suffering their characters to be damaged by the present condition of Ireland, and are undergoing a process which must end in their own ruin; because this demoralisation and pauperisation will go on in an extending circle, and will engulf the whole property of Ireland in one common ruin, unless something more be done than passing poor-laws and proposing rates in aid.

Sir, if ever there were an opportunity for a statesman, it is this. This is the hour undoubtedly, and we want the man. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has done many things for his country, for which I thank him as heartily as any man—he has shown on some occasions as much moral courage as it is necessary, in the state of public opinion, upon any question, for a statesman to show; but I have been much disappointed that, upon this Irish question, he has seemed to shrink from a full consideration of the difficulty, and from a resolution to meet it fairly. The character of the present, the character of any Government under such circumstances, must be at stake. The noble

Lord cannot, in his position, remain inactive. Let him be as innocent as he may, he can never justify himself to the country, or to the world, or to posterity, if he remains at the head of this Imperial Legislature and is still unable, or unwilling, to bring forward measures for the restoration of Ireland. I would address the same language also to the noble Lord at the head of the Irish Government, who has won, I must say, the admiration of the population of this country for the temper and manner in which he has administered the government of Ireland. But he must bear in mind that it is not the highest effort of statesmanship to preserve the peace in a country where there are very few men anxious to go to war, and to preserve the peace, too, with 50,000 armed men at his command, and the whole power of this empire to back him. All that may be necessary, and peace at all hazards must be secured; but if that distinguished Nobleman intends to be known hereafter as a statesman with regard to his rule in Ireland, he must be prepared to suggest measures to the Government of a more practical and directly operative character than any he has yet initiated.

Sir, I am ashamed, I must say, of the course which we have taken upon this question. Look at that great subscription that was raised three years ago for Ireland. There was scarcely a part of the globe from which subscriptions did not come. The Pope, as was very natural, subscribed—the head of the great Mahometan empire, the Grand Seignior, sent his thousand pounds—the uttermost parts of the earth sent in their donations. A tribe of Red Indians on the American continent sent their subscription; and I have it on good authority that even the slaves on a plantation in one of the Carolinas subscribed their sorrowful mite that the miseries of Ireland might be relieved. The whole world looked upon the condition of Ireland, and helped to mitigate her miseries. What can we say to all those contributors,

who, now that they have paid, must be anxious to know if anything is done to prevent a recurrence of these calamities? We must tell them with blushes that nothing has been done, but that we are still going on with the poor-rates, and that, having exhausted the patience of the people of England in Parliamentary grants, we are coming now with rates in aid, restricted altogether to the property of Ireland. That is what we have to tell them; whilst we have to acknowledge that our Constitution, boasted of as it has been for generations past, utterly fails to grapple with this great question.

Hon. Gentlemen turn with triumph to neighbouring countries, and speak in glowing terms of our glorious Constitution. It is true, that abroad thrones and dynasties have been overturned, whilst in England peace has reigned undisturbed. But take all the lives that have been lost in the last twelve months in Europe amidst the convulsions that have occurred —take all the cessation of trade, the destruction of industry, all the crushing of hopes and hearts, and they will not compare for an instant with the agonies which have been endured by the population of Ireland under your glorious Constitution. And there are those who now say that this is the ordering of Providence. I met an Irish gentleman the other night, and, speaking upon the subject, he said that he saw no remedy, but that it seemed as if the present state of things were the mode by which Providence intended to solve the question of Irish difficulties. But let us not lay these calamities at the door of Providence; it were sinful in us, of all men, to do so. God has blessed Ireland—and does still bless her—in position, in soil, in climate; He has not withdrawn His promises, nor are they unfulfilled; there is still the sunshine and the shower; still the seed-time and the harvest; and the affluent bosom of the earth yet offers sustenance for man. But man must do his part—we must do our part—we must retrace our steps—we must shun

the blunders, and, I would even say, the crimes of our past legislation. We must free the land, and then we shall discover, and not till then, that industry, hopeful and remunerated—industry, free and inviolate, is the only sure foundation on which can be reared the enduring edifice of union and of peace.

# IRELAND.

## V.

### HABEAS CORPUS SUSPENSION BILL.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 17, 1866.

[The Fenian Conspiracy and threatened Insurrection in Ireland compelled the Government to introduce a Bill to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. It was brought in suddenly, the House meeting on Saturday to consider it.]

I OWE an apology to the Irish Members for stepping in to make an observation to the House on this question. My strong interest in the affairs of their country, ever since I came into Parliament, will be my sufficient excuse. The Secretary of State, on the part of the Government of which he is a Member, has called us together on an unusual day and at an unusual hour, to consider a proposition of the greatest magnitude, and which we are informed is one of extreme urgency. If it be so, I hope it will not be understood that we are here merely to carry out the behests of the Administration; and that we are to be permitted, if we choose, to discuss this measure, and if possible to say something which may mitigate the apparent harshness of the course which the Government feels itself compelled to pursue.

It is now more than twenty-two years since I was first permitted to take my seat in this House. During that time I have on many occasions, with great favour, been allowed to address it, but I declare that during the whole of that period I have never risen to speak here under so strong a feeling, as a Member of the House, of shame and of humiliation, as that by which I find myself oppressed at this moment. The Secretary of State proposes—as the right hon. Gentleman himself has said—to deprive no inconsiderable portion of the subjects of the Queen—our countrymen, within the United Kingdom—of the commonest, of the most precious, and of the most sacred right of the English Constitution, the right to their personal freedom. From the statement of the Secretary of State it is clear that this is not asked to be done, or required to be done, with reference only to a small section of the Irish people. He has named great counties, wide districts, whole provinces, over which this alleged and undoubted disaffection has spread, and has proposed that five or six millions of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom shall suffer the loss of that right of personal freedom that is guaranteed to all Her Majesty's subjects by the Constitution of these realms.

Now, I do not believe that the Secretary of State has overstated his case for the purpose of inducing the House to consent to his proposition. I believe that if the majority of the people of Ireland, counted fairly out, had their will, and if they had the power, they would unmoor the island from its fastenings in the deep, and move it at least 2,000 miles to the West. And I believe, further, that if by conspiracy, or insurrection, or by that open agitation to which alone I ever would give any favour or consent, they could shake off the authority, I will not say of the English Crown, but of the Imperial Parliament, they would gladly do so.

An hon. Member from Ireland a few nights ago referred to the character of the Irish people. He said, and I believe

it is true, that there is no Christian nation with which we are acquainted amongst the people of which crime of the ordinary character, as we reckon it in this country, is so rare as it is amongst his countrymen. He might have said, also, that there is no people—whatever they may be at home—more industrious than his countrymen in every other country but their own. He might have said more; that they are a people of a cheerful and joyous temperament. He might have said more than this—that they are singularly grateful for kindnesses shown to them, and that of all the people of our race they are filled with the strongest sentiment of veneration.

And yet, with such materials and with such a people, after centuries of government—after sixty-five years of government by this House—you have them embittered against your rule, and anxious only to throw off the authority of the Crown and Queen of these realms. Now, this is not a single occasion we are discussing. This is merely an access of the complaint Ireland has been suffering under during the lifetime of the oldest man in this House, that of chronic insurrection. No man can deny this. I dare say a large number of the Members of this House, at the time to which the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire referred, heard the same speech on the same subject, from the same Minister to whom we have listened to-day. [Sir G. Grey: 'No!'] I certainly thought I heard the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department make a speech before on the same question, but he was a Minister of the Government on whose behalf a similar speech was made on the occasion referred to, and no doubt concurred in every word that was uttered by his Colleague.

Sixty-five years ago this country and this Parliament undertook to govern Ireland. I will say nothing of the manner in which that duty was brought upon us—except this—that it was by proceedings disgraceful and corrupt to the last degree.

I will say nothing of the pretences under which it was brought about but this—that the English Parliament and people, and the Irish people too, were told, that if they once got rid of the Irish Parliament they would dethrone for ever Irish factions, and that with a united Parliament we should become a united, and stronger, and happier people. During these sixty-five years—and on this point I ask for the attention of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) who has just spoken—there are only three considerable measures which Parliament has passed in the interests of Ireland. One of them was the measure of 1829, for the emancipation of the Catholics and to permit them to have seats in this House. But that measure, so just, so essential, and which, of course, is not ever to be recalled, was a measure which the chief Minister of the day, a great soldier, and a great judge of military matters, admitted was passed under the menace of, and only because of, the danger of civil war. The other two measures to which I have referred are that for the relief of the poor, and that for the sale of the incumbered estates; and those measures were introduced to the House and passed through the House in the emergency of a famine more severe than any that has desolated any Christian country of the world within the last four hundred years.

Except on these two emergencies I appeal to every Irish Member, and to every English Member who has paid any attention to the matter, whether the statement is not true that this Parliament has done nothing for the people of Ireland. And, more than that, their complaints have been met—complaints of their sufferings have been met—often by denial, often by insult, often by contempt. And within the last few years we have heard from this very Treasury bench observations with regard to Ireland which no friend of Ireland or of England, and no Minister of the Crown, ought to have uttered with regard to that country. Twice in my Parliamentary life this thing has been done—at least

by the close of this day will have been done—and measures of repression—measures for the suspension of the civil rights of the Irish people—have been brought into Parliament and passed with extreme and unusual rapidity.

I have not risen to blame the Secretary of State or to blame his Colleagues for the act of to-day. There may be circumstances to justify a proposition of this kind, and I am not here to deny that these circumstances now exist; but what I complain of is this: there is no statesmanship merely in acts of force and acts of repression. And more than that, I have not observed since I have been in Parliament anything on this Irish question that approaches to the dignity of statesmanship. There has been, I admit, an improved administration in Ireland. There have been Lord-Lieutenants anxious to be just, and there is one there now who is probably as anxious to do justice as any man. We have observed generally in the recent Trials a better tone and temper than were ever witnessed under similar circumstances in Ireland before. But if I go back to the Ministers who have sat on the Treasury Bench since I first came into this House—Sir Robert Peel first, then Lord John Russell, then Lord Aberdeen, then Lord Derby, then Lord Palmerston, then Lord Derby again, then Lord Palmerston again, and now Earl Russell—I say that with regard to all these men, there has not been any approach to anything that history will describe as statesmanship on the part of the English Government towards Ireland. There were Coercion Bills in abundance—Arms Bills Session after Session—lamentations like that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was not made perpetual by a clause which he laments was repealed.

There have been Acts for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, like that which we are now discussing; but there has been no statesmanship. Men, the most clumsy

and brutal, can do these things; but we want men of higher temper—men of higher genius—men of higher patriotism to deal with the affairs of Ireland. I should like to know whether those statesmen who hold great offices have themselves comprehended the nature of this question. If they have not, they have been manifestly ignorant; and if they have comprehended it and have not dealt with it, they have concealed that which they knew from the people, and evaded the duty they owed to their Sovereign. I do not want to speak disrespectfully of men in office. It is not my custom in this House. I know something of the worrying labours to which they are subjected, and I know not how from day to day they bear the burden of the labour imposed upon them; but still I lament that those who wear the garb—enjoy the emoluments—and I had almost said usurp the dignity of statesmanship, sink themselves merely into respectable and honourable administrators, when there is a whole nation under the sovereignty of the Queen calling for all their anxious thoughts—calling for the highest exercise of the highest qualities of the statesman.

I put the question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is the only man of this Government whom I have heard of late years who has spoken as if he comprehended this question, and he made a speech in the last Session of Parliament which was not without its influence both in England and in Ireland. I should like to ask him whether this Irish question is above the stature of himself and of his Colleagues? If it be, I ask them to come down from the high places which they occupy, and try to learn the art of legislation and government before they practise it. I myself believe, if we could divest ourselves of the feelings engendered by party strife, we might come to some better result. Take the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Is there in any legislative assembly in the world a man, as the world judges, of more transcendent capacity? I will say even, is there a man with a more honest wish to do

good to the country in which he occupies so conspicuous a place?

Take the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the leader of the Opposition—is there in any legislative assembly in the world, at this moment, a man leading an Opposition of more genius for his position, who has given in every way but one in which proof can be given that he is competent to the highest duties of the highest offices of the State? Well, but these men—great men whom we on this side and you on that side, to a large extent, admire and follow—fight for office, and the result is they sit alternately, one on this side and one on that. But suppose it were possible for these men, with their intellects, with their far-reaching vision, to examine this question thoroughly, and to say for once, whether this leads to office and to the miserable notoriety that men call fame which springs from office, or not, 'If it be possible, we will act with loyalty to the Sovereign and justice to the people; and if it be possible, we will make Ireland a strength and not a weakness to the British Empire.' It is from this fighting with party, and for party, and for the gains which party gives, that there is so little result from the great intellect of such men as these. Like the captive Samson of old,—

> 'They grind in brazen fetters, under task,
> With their Heaven-gifted strength'

and the country and the world gain little by those faculties which God has given them for the blessing of the country and the world.

The Secretary of State and the right hon. Gentleman opposite have referred, even in stronger language, to the unhappy fact that much of what now exists in Ireland has been brought there from the United States of America. That is not a fact for us to console ourselves with; it only adds to the gravity and the difficulty of this question. You may depend upon it that if the Irish in America, having left this country, settle there with so strong a hostility to us, they

have had their reasons—and if being there with that feeling of affection for their native country which in all other cases in which we are not concerned we admire and reverence, they interfere in Ireland and stir up there the sedition that now exists, depend upon it there is in the condition of Ireland a state of things which greatly favours their attempts. There can be no continued fire without fuel, and all the Irish in America, and all the citizens of America, united together, with all their organization and all their vast resources, would not raise the very slightest flame of sedition or of insurrectionary movement in England or in Scotland. I want to know why they can do it in Ireland? Are you to say, as some people say in America and in Jamaica when speaking of the black man, that 'Nothing can be made of the Irishman'?

Everything can be made of him in every country but his own. When he has passed through the American school—I speak of him as a child, or in the second generation of the Irish emigrant in that country—he is as industrious, as frugal, as independent, as loyal, as good a citizen of the American Republic, as any man born within the dominions of that Power. Why is it not so in Ireland? I have asked the question before, and I will ask it again—it is a pertinent question, and it demands an answer. Why is it that no Scotchman who leaves Scotland—and the Scotch have been taunted and ridiculed for being so ready to leave their country for a better climate and a better soil—how comes it, I ask, that no Scotchman who emigrates to the United States, and no Englishman who plants himself there, cherishes the smallest hostility to the people, to the institutions, or to the Government of his native country? Why does every Irishman who leaves his country and goes to the United States immediately settle himself down there, resolved to better his condition in life, but with a feeling of ineradicable hatred to the laws and institutions of the land of his birth? Is not this a fit question for statesmanship?

If the Secretary of State, since his last measure was brought in, now eighteen years ago, had had time, in the multiplicity of his duties, to consider this question; instead of now moving for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, he might possibly have been rejoicing at the universal loyalty which prevailed, not throughout Great Britain only, but throughout the whole population of Ireland. I spent two autumns in Ireland in the years 1849 and 1852, and I recollect making a speech in this House not long afterwards, which some persons thought was not very wide of the mark. I recommended the Ministers of that time to take an opportunity to hold an Irish Session of the Imperial Parliament—to have no great questions discussed connected with the ordinary matters which are brought before us, but to keep Parliament to the consideration of this Irish question solely, and to deal with those great matters which are constant sources of complaint; and I said that a Session that was so devoted to such a blessed and holy work, would be a Session, if it were successful, that would stand forth in all our future history as one of the noblest which had ever passed in the annals of the Imperial Parliament.

Now, Sir, a few days ago everybody in this House, with two or three exceptions, was taking an oath at that table. It is called the Oath of Allegiance. It is meant at once to express loyalty and to keep men loyal. I do not think it generally does bind men to loyalty, if they have not loyalty without it. I hold loyalty to consist, in a country like this, as much in doing justice to the people as in guarding the Crown; for I believe there is no guardianship of the Crown in a country like this, where the Crown is not supposed to rest absolutely upon force, so safe as that of which we know more in our day probably than has been known in former periods of our history, when the occupant of the Throne is respected, admired, and loved by the general people. Now, how comes it that these great statesmen whom I have named,

with all their Colleagues, some of them as eminent almost as their leaders, have never tried what they could do—have never shown their loyalty to the Crown by endeavouring to make the Queen as safe in the hearts of the people of Ireland as she is in the hearts of the people of England and of Scotland?

Bear in mind that the Queen of England can do almost nothing in these matters. By our Constitution the Crown can take no direct part in them. The Crown cannot direct the policy of the Government; nay, the Crown cannot, without the consent of this House, even select its Ministers; therefore the Crown is helpless in this matter. And we have in this country a Queen, who, in all the civilized nations of the world, is looked upon as a model of a Sovereign, and yet her name and fame are discredited and dishonoured by circumstances such as those which have twice during her reign called us together to agree to a proposition like that which is brought before us to-day.

There is an instructive anecdote to be found in the annals of the Chinese Empire. In a remote province there was an insurrection. The Emperor put down the insurrection, but he abased and humbled himself before the people, and said that if he had been guilty of neglect he acknowledged his guilt, and he humbled himself before those on whom he had brought the evil of an insurrection in one of his provinces. The Queen of these realms is not so responsible. She cannot thus humble herself; but I say that your statesmen for the last forty—for the last sixty—years are thus guilty, and that they ought to humble themselves before the people of this country for their neglect. But I have heard from Members in this House—I have seen much writing in newspapers—and I have heard of speeches elsewhere, in which some of us, who advocate what we believe to be a great and high morality in public affairs, are charged with dislike to the institutions, and even disloyalty to the dynasty which rules in England. There can be nothing more offensive, nothing more unjust, nothing more

utterly false. We who ask Parliament, in dealing with Ireland, to deal with it upon the unchangeable principles of justice, are the friends of the people, and the really loyal advisers and supporters of the Throne.

All history teaches us that it is not in human nature that men should be content under any system of legislation, and of institutions such as exist in Ireland. You may pass this Bill, you may put the Home Secretary's five hundred men into gaol—you may do more than this, you may suppress the conspiracy and put down the insurrection, but the moment it is suppressed there will still remain the germs of this malady, and from those germs will grow up as heretofore another crop of insurrection and another harvest of misfortune. And it may be that those who sit here eighteen years after this moment will find another Ministry and another Secretary of State ready to propose to you another administration of the same ever-failing and ever-poisonous medicine. I say there is a mode of making Ireland loyal. I say that the Parliament of England having abolished the Parliament of Ireland is doubly bound to examine what that mode is, and, if it can discover it, to adopt it. I say that the Minister who occupies office in this country, merely that he may carry on the daily routine of administration, who dares not grapple with this question, who dares not go into Opposition, and who will sit anywhere except where he can tell his mind freely to the House and to the country, may have a high position in the country, but he is not a statesman, nor is he worthy of the name.

Sir, I shall not oppose the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman. The circumstances, I presume, are such that the course which is about to be pursued is perhaps the only merciful course for Ireland. But I suppose it is not the intention of the Government, in the case of persons who are arrested, and against whom any just complaint can be made, to do anything more than that which the ordinary law

permits, and that when men are brought to trial they will be brought to trial with all the fairness and all the advantages which the ordinary law gives. I should say what was most unjust to the Gentlemen sitting on that (the Treasury) bench, if I said aught else than that I believe they are as honestly disposed to do right in this matter as I am and as I have ever been. I implore them, if they can, to shake off the trammels of doubt and fear with regard to this question, and to say something that may be soothing—something that may give hope to Ireland.

I voted the other night with the hon. Member for Tralee (The O'Donoghue). We were in a very small minority. ['Hear, hear.'] Yes, I have often been in small minorities. The hon. Gentleman would have been content with a word of kindness and of sympathy, not for conspiracy, but for the people of Ireland. That word was not inserted in the Queen's speech, and to-night the Home Secretary has made a speech urging the House to the course which, I presume, is about to be pursued; but he did not in that speech utter a single sentence with regard to a question which lies behind, and is greater and deeper than that which is discussed.

I hope, Sir, that if Ministers feel themselves bound to take this course of suspending the common rights of personal freedom to a whole nation, at least they will not allow this debate to close without giving to us and to that nation some hope that before long measures will be considered and will be introduced which will tend to create the same loyalty in Ireland that exists in Great Britain. If every man outside the walls of this House who has the interest of the whole Empire at heart were to speak here, what would he say to this House? Let not one day elapse, let not another Session pass, until you have done something to wipe off this blot—for blot it is upon the reign of the Queen, and scandal it is to the civilization and to the justice of the people of this country.

# IRELAND.

## VI.

### DUBLIN, OCTOBER 30, 1866.

[Mr. Bright was invited to a Public Banquet in Dublin. The invitation was signed by more than twenty Members of Parliament, and by a large number of influential Members of the Liberal Party in Ireland. This speech was spoken at the Banquet. The O'Donoghue was in the Chair.]

I FEEL myself more embarrassed than I can well describe at the difficult but honourable position in which I find myself to-night. I am profoundly moved by the exceeding and generous kindness with which you have received me, and all I can do is to thank you for it, and to say how grateful to my heart it is that such a number as I see before me—I will say of my countrymen—have approved generally of the political course which I have pursued. But I may assure you that the difficulty of this position is not at all of my seeking. I heard during the last Session of Parliament that if I was likely to come to Ireland during the autumn, it was not improbable that I should be asked to some banquet of this kind in this city. I had an intention of coming, but being moved by this kindness or menace, I changed my mind, and spent some weeks in Scotland instead of Ireland.

When I found from the newspapers that an invitation was being signed, asking me to come here, I wrote to my honourable friend, Sir John Gray, to ask him if he would be kind enough to put an extinguisher upon the project, inasmuch as I was not intending to cross the Channel. He said that the matter had proceeded so far that it was impossible to interfere with it—that it must take its natural course; and the result was that I received an invitation signed, I think, by about one hundred and forty names, amongst whom there were not less, I believe, than twenty-two Members of the House of Commons. Well, as you will probably imagine, I felt that this invitation was of such a nature that, although it was most difficult to accede to it, it was impossible to refuse it. This accounts for my being here to-night, and is a simple explanation of what has taken place.

I said amongst the signatures were the names of not less than twenty-two Members of the House of Commons. I speak with grief when I say that one of our friends who signed that invitation is no longer with us. I had not the pleasure of a long acquaintance with Mr. Dillon, but I shall take this opportunity of saying that during the last Session of Parliament I formed a very high opinion of his character. There was that in his eye and in the tone of his voice—in his manner altogether, which marked him for an honourable and a just man. I venture to say that his sad and sudden removal is a great loss to Ireland. I believe amongst all her worthy sons, Ireland has had no worthier and no nobler son than John Blake Dillon.

I shall not be wrong if I assume that the ground of my visit to Dublin is to be found first in the sympathy which I have always felt and expressed for the condition, and for the wrongs, and for the rights of the people of Ireland, and probably also because I am supposed, in some degree, to represent some amount of the opinion in England, which is also favourable to the true interests of this island.

The Irish question is a question that has often been discussed, and yet it remains at this day as much a question as it has been for centuries past. The Parliament of Kilkenny,—a Parliament that sat a very long time ago, if indeed it was a Parliament at all,—it was a Parliament that sat about five hundred years ago, which proposed, I believe, to inflict a very heavy penalty if any Irishman's horse was found grazing on any Englishman's land,—this Parliament left on record a question, which it may be worth our while to consider to-night. It put this question to the King, 'How comes it to pass that the King was never the richer for Ireland?' We, five hundred years afterwards, venture to ask this question, 'Why is it that the Queen, or the Crown, or the United Kingdom, or the Empire, is never the richer for Ireland?'—and if you will permit me I will try to give you as clearly as I can something like an answer to that very old question. What it may be followed by is this, How is it that we, the Imperial Parliament, cannot act so as to bring about in Ireland contentment and tranquillity, and a solid union between Ireland and Great Britain? And that means, further, How can we improve the condition and change the minds of the people of Ireland? Some say (I have heard many who say it in England, and I am afraid there are Irishmen also who would say it), that there is some radical defect in the Irish character which prevents the condition of Ireland being so satisfactory as is the condition of England and of Scotland. Now, I am inclined to believe that whatever there is that is defective in any portion of the Irish people comes not from their race, but from their history, and from the conditions to which they have been subjected.

I am told by those in authority that in Ireland there is a remarkable absence of crime. I have heard since I came to Dublin, from those well acquainted with the facts, that there is probably no great city in the world—in the civilized and Christian world—of equal population with the city in which

we are now assembled, where there is so little crime committed. And I find that the portion of the Irish people which has found a home in the United States has in the period of sixteen years—between 1848 and 1864—remitted about 13,000,000*l.* sterling to their friends and relatives in Ireland. I am bound to place these facts in opposition to any statements that I hear as to any radical defects of the Irish character. I say that it would be much more probable that the defect lies in the Government and in the law. But there are some others who say that the great misfortune of Ireland is in the existence of the noxious race of political agitators. Well, as to that I may state, that the most distinguished political agitators that have appeared during the last hundred years in Ireland are Grattan and O'Connell, and I should say that he must be either a very stupid or a very base Irishman who would wish to erase the achievements of Grattan and O'Connell from the annals of his country.

But some say (and this is not an uncommon thing)—some say that the priests of the popular Church in Ireland have been the cause of much discontent. I believe there is no class of men in Ireland who have a deeper interest in a prosperous and numerous community than the priests of the Catholic Church; and further, I believe that no men have suffered more—have suffered more, I mean, in mind and in feeling—from witnessing the miseries and the desolation which during the last century (to go no further back) have stricken and afflicted the Irish people.

But some others say that there is no ground of complaint, because the laws and institutions of Ireland are, in the main, the same as the laws and institutions of England and Scotland. They say, for example, that if there be an Established Church in Ireland there is one in England and one in Scotland, and that Nonconformists are very numerous both in England and in Scotland; but they seem to forget this

fact, that the Church in England or the Church in Scotland is not in any sense a foreign Church—that it has not been imposed in past times, and is not maintained by force—that it is not in any degree the symbol of conquest—that it is not the Church of a small minority, absorbing the ecclesiastical revenues and endowments of a whole kingdom; and they omit to remember or to acknowledge that if any Government attempted to plant by force the Episcopal Church in Scotland or the Catholic Church in England, the disorders and discontent which have prevailed in Ireland would be witnessed with tenfold intensity and violence in Great Britain. And these persons whom I am describing also say that the land laws in Ireland are the same as the land laws in England. It would be easy to show that the land laws in England are bad enough, and that but for the outlet of the population, afforded by our extraordinary manufacturing industry, the condition of England would in all probability become quite as bad as the condition of Ireland has been; but if the countries differ with regard to land and the management of it in their customs, may it not be reasonable that they should also differ in their laws?

In Ireland the landowner is the creature of conquest, not of conquest of eight hundred years ago, but of conquest completed only two hundred years ago; and it may be well for us to remember, and for all Englishmen to remember, that succeeding that transfer of the land to the new-comers from Great Britain, there followed a system of law, known by the name of the Penal Code, of the most ingenious cruelty, and such as, I believe, has never in modern times been inflicted on any Christian people. Unhappily, on this account, the wound which was opened by the conquest has never been permitted to be closed, and thus we have had landowners in Ireland of a different race, of a different religion, and of different ideas from the great bulk of the people, and there has been a constant and bitter war between the owners and

occupiers of the soil. Now, up to this point I suppose that even the gentlemen who were dining together the other evening in Belfast would probably agree with me, because what I have stated is mere matter of notorious history, and to be found in every book which has treated of the course of Irish affairs during the last two hundred years. But I think they would agree with me even further than this. They would say that Ireland is a land which has been torn by religious factions, and torn by these factions at least in the North as much as in the South; and I think they would be doing less than justice to the inhabitants of the North if they said that they had in any degree come short of the people of the South in the intensity of their passionate feelings with regard to their Church.

But Ireland has been more than this—it has been a land of evictions—a word which, I suspect, is scarcely known in any other civilized country. It is a country from which thousands of families have been driven by the will of the landowners and the power of the law. It is a country where have existed, to a great extent, those dread tribunals known by the common name of secret societies, by which, in pursuit of what some men have thought to be justice, there have been committed crimes of appalling guilt in the eye of the whole world. It is a country, too, in which—and it is the only Christian country of which it may be said for some centuries past—it is a country in which a famine of the most desolating character has prevailed even during our own time. I think I was told in 1849, as I stood in the burial-ground at Skibbereen, that at least 400 people who had died of famine were buried within the quarter of an acre of ground on which I was then looking. It is a country, too, from which there has been a greater emigration by sea within a given time than has been known at any time from any other country in the world. It is a country where there has been, for generations past, a general sense of wrong, out of which has grown a

state of chronic insurrection; and at this very moment when I speak, the general safeguard of constitutional liberty is withdrawn, and we meet in this hall, and I speak here to-night, rather by the forbearance and permission of the Irish executive than under the protection of the common safeguards of the rights and liberties of the people of the United Kingdom.

I venture to say that this is a miserable and a humiliating picture to draw of this country. Bear in mind that I am not speaking of Poland suffering under the conquest of Russia. There is a gentleman, now a candidate for an Irish county, who is very great upon the wrongs of Poland; but I have found him always in the House of Commons taking sides with that great party which has systematically supported the wrongs of Ireland. I am not speaking about Hungary, or of Venice as she was under the rule of Austria, or of the Greeks under the dominion of the Turk, but I am speaking of Ireland—part of the United Kingdom—part of that which boasts itself to be the most civilized and the most Christian nation in the world. I took the liberty recently, at a meeting in Glasgow, to say that I believed it was impossible for a class to govern a great nation wisely and justly. Now, in Ireland there has been a field in which all the principles of the Tory party have had their complete experiment and development. You have had the country gentleman in all his power. You have had any number of Acts of Parliament which the ancient Parliament of Ireland or the Parliament of the United Kingdom could give him. You have had the Established Church supported by the law, even to the extent, not many years ago, of collecting its revenues by the aid of military force. In point of fact, I believe it would be impossible to imagine a state of things in which the principles of the Tory party have had a more entire and complete opportunity for their trial than they have had within the limits of this island. And yet what has happened? This, surely.

That the kingdom has been continually weakened—that the harmony of the empire has been disturbed, and that the mischief has not been confined to the United Kingdom, but has spread to the Colonies. And at this moment, as we know by every arrival from the United States, the colony of Canada is exposed to danger of invasion—that it is forced to keep on foot soldiers which it otherwise would not want, and to involve itself in expenses which threaten to be ruinous to its financial condition, and all that it may defend itself from Irishmen hostile to England who are settled in the United States.

In fact, the Government of Lord Derby at this moment is doing exactly that which the Government of Lord North did nearly a hundred years ago—it is sending out troops across the Atlantic to fight Irishmen who are the bitter enemies of England on the American continent. Now, I believe every gentleman in this room will admit that all that I have said is literally true. And if it be true, what conclusion are we to come to? Is it that the law which rules in Ireland is bad, but the people good; or that the law is good, but the people bad? Now, let us, if we can, get rid for a moment of Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Protestantism, and Orangeism on the one hand, and of Catholicism, Romanism, and Ultramontanism on the other,—let us for a moment get beyond all these 'isms,' and try if we can discover what it is that is the great evil in your country. I shall ask you only to turn your eye upon two points—the first is the Established Church, and the second is the tenure of land. The Church may be said to affect the soul and sentiment of the country, and the land question may be said to affect the means of life and the comforts of the people.

I shall not blame the bishops and clergy of the Established Church. There may be, and I doubt not there are amongst them, many pious and devoted men, who labour to the utmost of their power to do good in the district which is committed to their care; but I venture to say this, that if they were all

good and all pious, it would not in a national point of view compensate for this one fatal error—the error of their existence as the ministers of an Established Protestant Church in Ireland. Every man of them is necessarily in his district a symbol of the supremacy of the few and of the subjection of the many; and although the amount of the revenue of the Established Church as the sum payable by the whole nation may not be considerable, yet bear in mind that it is often the galling of the chain which is more tormenting than the weight of it. I believe that the removal of the Established Church would create a new political and social atmosphere in Ireland —that it would make the people feel that old things had passed away—that all things had become new—that an Irishman and his faith were no longer to be condemned in his own country—and that for the first time the English people and the English Parliament intended to do full justice to Ireland.

Now, leaving the Established Church, I come to the question of the land. I have said that the ownership of the land in Ireland came originally from conquest and from confiscation, and, as a matter of course, there was created a great gulf between the owner and the occupier, and from that time to this doubtless there has been wanting that sympathy which exists to a large extent in Great Britain, and that ought to exist in every country. I am told—you can answer it if I am wrong—that it is not common in Ireland now to give leases to tenants, especially to Catholic tenants. If that be so, then the security for the property of the tenant rests only upon the good feeling and favour of the owner of the land, for the laws, as we know, have been made by the landowners, and many propositions for the advantage of the tenants have unfortunately been too little considered by Parliament. The result is that you have bad farming, bad dwelling-houses, bad temper, and everything bad connected with the occupation and cultivation of land in Ireland. One of the results—a result the

most appalling—is this, that your population are fleeing from your country and seeking a refuge in a distant land. On this point I wish to refer to a letter which I received a few days ago from a most esteemed citizen of Dublin. He told me that he believed that a very large portion of what he called the poor, amongst Irishmen, sympathized with any scheme or any proposition that was adverse to the Imperial Government. He said further, that the people here are rather in the country than of it, and that they are looking more to America than they are looking to England. I think there is a good deal in that. When we consider how many Irishmen have found a refuge in America, I do not know how we can wonder at that statement.

You will recollect that when the ancient Hebrew prophet prayed in his captivity he prayed with his window opened towards Jerusalem. You know that the followers of Mahommed, when they pray, turn their faces towards Mecca. When the Irish peasant asks for food, and freedom, and blessing, his eye follows the setting sun; the aspirations of his heart reach beyond the wide Atlantic, and in spirit he grasps hands with the great Republic of the West. If this be so, I say, then, that the disease is not only serious, but it is even desperate; but desperate as it is, I believe there is a certain remedy for it, if the people and the Parliament of the United Kingdom are willing to apply it. Now, if it were possible, would it not be worth while to change the sentiments and improve the condition of the Irish cultivators of the soil? If we were to remove the State Church, there would still be a Church, but it would not be a supremacy Church. The Catholics of Ireland have no idea of saying that Protestantism in its various forms shall not exist in their island. There would still be a Church, but it would be a free Church of a section of a free people. I will not go into details about the change. Doubtless every man would say that the present occupants of the livings should not, during their life-

time, be disturbed; but if the principle of the abolition of the State Church were once fixed and accepted, it would not be difficult to arrange the details that would be satisfactory to the people of Ireland.

Who objects to this? The men who are in favour of supremacy, and the men who have a fanatical hatred of what they call Popery. To honest and good men of the Protestant Church and of the Protestant faith there is no reason whatever to fear this change. What has the voluntary system done in Scotland? What has it done amongst the Nonconformists of England? What has it done amongst the population of Wales? and what has it done amongst the Catholic population of your own Ireland? In my opinion, the abolition of the Established Church would give Protestantism itself another chance. I believe there has been in Ireland no other enemy of Protestantism so injurious as the Protestant State Establishment. It has been loaded for two hundred years with the sins of bad government and bad laws, and whatever may have been the beauty and the holiness of its doctrine or of its professors, it has not been able to hold its ground, loaded as it has been by the sins of a bad government. One effect of the Established Church has been this, the making Catholicism in Ireland not only a faith but a patriotism, for it was not likely that any member of the Catholic Church would incline in the slightest degree to Protestantism so long as it presented itself to his eyes as a wrong-doer and full of injustice in connection with the government of his country.

But if honest Protestantism has nothing to fear from the changes that I would recommend, what has the honest landowner to fear? The history of Europe and America for the last one hundred years affords scarcely any picture more painful than that which is afforded by the landowners of this kingdom. The Irish landowner has been different from every other landowner, for the bulk of his land has only been about half cultivated, and he has had to collect his rents by

a process approaching the evils of civil war. His property has been very insecure—the sale of it sometimes has been rendered impossible. The landowner himself has often been hated by those who ought to have loved him. He has been banished from his ancestral home by terror, and not a few have lost their lives without the sympathy of those who ought to have been their protectors and their friends. I would like to ask, what can be much worse than this? If in this country fifty years ago, as in Prussia, there had arisen statesmen who would have taken one-third or one-half the land from the landowners of Ireland, and made it over to their tenants, I believe that the Irish landowner, great as would have been the injustice of which he might have complained, would in all probability have been richer and happier than he has been.

What is the first remedy which you would propose? Clearly this—that which is the most easily applicable and which would most speedily touch the condition of the country. It is this—that the property which the tenant shall invest or create in his farm shall be secured to the tenant by law. I believe that if Parliament were fairly to enact this it would make a change in the whole temper of the country. I recollect in the year 1849 being down in the county of Wexford. I called at the house of an old farmer of the name of Stafford, who lived in a very good house, the best farm-house, I think, that I had seen since leaving Dublin. He lived on his own farm, which he had bought fifteen years before. The house was a house which he had himself built. He was a venerable old man, and we had some very interesting conversation with him. I asked how it was he had so good a house? He said the farm was his own, and the house was his own, and, as no man could disturb him, he had made it a much better house than was common for the farmers of Ireland. I said to him, 'If all the farmers of Ireland had the same security for the capital they laid out on their farms, what would be the result?' The old man almost sprang out of his chair, and

said, 'Sir, if you will give us that encouragement, we will *bate* the hunger out of Ireland.' It is said that all this must be left to contract between the landlord and the tenant; but the public, which may be neither landlord nor tenant, has a great interest in this question; and I maintain that the interests of the public require that Parliament should secure to the tenant the property which he has invested in his farm. But I would not stop here.

There is another, and what I should call a more permanent and far-reaching remedy for the evils of Ireland, and those persons who stickle so much for political economy I hope will follow me in this. The great evil of Ireland is this—that the Irish people—the Irish nation—are dispossessed of the soil, and what we ought to do is to provide for, and aid in, their restoration to it by all measures of justice. Why should we tolerate in Ireland the law of primogeniture? Why should we tolerate the system of entails? Why should the object of the law be to accumulate land in great masses in few hands, and to make it almost impossible for persons of small means, and tenant-farmers, to become possessors of land? If you go to other countries—for example, to Norway, to Denmark, to Holland, to Belgium, to France, to Germany, to Italy, or to the United States, you will find that in all these countries those laws of which I complain have been abolished, and the land is just as free to buy and sell, and hold and cultivate, as any other description of property in the kingdom. No doubt your Landed Estates Court and your Record of Titles Act were good measures, but they were good because they were in the direction that I want to travel farther in.

But I would go farther than that; I would deal with the question of absenteeism. I am not going to propose to tax absentees; but if my advice were taken, we should have a Parliamentary Commission empowered to buy up the large estates in Ireland belonging to the English nobility, for the purpose of selling them on easy terms to the occupiers of the

farms and to the tenantry of Ireland. Now, let me be fairly understood. I am not proposing to tax absentees; I am not proposing to take any of their property from them; but I propose this, that a Parliamentary Commission should be empowered to treat for the purchase of those large estates with a view of selling them to the tenantry of Ireland. Now, here are some of them—the present Prime Minister Lord Derby, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Marquis of Hertford, the Marquis of Bath, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Devonshire, and many others. They have estates in Ireland; many of them, I dare say, are just as well managed as any other estates in the country; but what you want is to restore to Ireland a middle-class proprietary of the soil; and I venture to say that if these estates could be purchased and could be sold out farm by farm to the tenant occupiers in Ireland, that it would be infinitely better in a conservative sense, than that they should belong to great proprietors living out of the country.

I have said that the disease is desperate, and that the remedy must be searching. I assert that the present system of government with regard to the Church and with regard to the land has failed disastrously in Ireland. Under it Ireland has become an object of commiseration to the whole world, and a discredit to the United Kingdom, of which it forms a part. It is a land of many sorrows. Men fight for supremacy, and call it Protestantism; they fight for evil and bad laws, and they call it acting for the defence of property. Now, are there no good men in Ireland of those who are generally opposed to us in politics—are there none who can rise above the level of party? If there be such, I wish my voice might reach them. I have often asked myself whether patriotism is dead in Ireland. Cannot all the people of Ireland see that the calamities of their country are the creatures of the law, and if that be so, that just laws only can remove these calamities?

If Irishmen were united—if your 105 Members were for the

most part agreed, you might do almost anything that you liked —you might do it even in the present Parliament; but if you are disunited, then I know not how you can gain anything from a Parliament created as the Imperial Parliament is now. The classes who rule in Britain will hear your cry as they have heard it before, and will pay no attention to it. They will see your people leaving your shores, and they will think it no calamity to the country. They know that they have force to suppress insurrection, and, therefore, you can gain nothing from their fears. What, then, is your hope? It is in a better Parliament, representing fairly the United Kingdom—the movement which is now in force in England and Scotland, and which is your movement as much as ours. If there were 100 more Members, the representatives of large and free constituencies, then your cry would be heard, and the people would give you that justice which a class has so long denied you. The great party that is now in power—the Tory party —denies that you have any just cause of complaint.

In a speech delivered the other day in Belfast, much was said of the enforcement of the law; but there was nothing said about any change or amendment in the law. With this party terror is their only specific,—they have no confidence in allegiance except where there is no power to rebel. Now, I differ from these men entirely. I believe that at the root of a general discontent there is in all countries a general grievance and general suffering. The surface of society is not incessantly disturbed without a cause. I recollect in the poem of the greatest of Italian poets, he tells us that as he saw in vision the Stygian lake, and stood upon its banks, he observed the constant commotion upon the surface of the pool, and his good instructor and guide explained to him the cause of it—

> 'This, too, for certain know, that underneath
> The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
> Into these bubbles make the surface heave,
> As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn.'

And I say in Ireland for generations back, that the misery and the wrongs of the people have made their sign, and have found a voice in constant insurrection and disorder. I have said that Ireland is a country of many wrongs and of many sorrows. Her past lies almost all in shadow. Her present is full of anxiety and peril. Her future depends on the power of her people to substitute equality and justice for supremacy, and a generous patriotism for the spirit of faction. In the effort now making in Great Britain to create a free representation of the people you have the deepest interest. The people never wish to suffer, and they never wish to inflict injustice. They have no sympathy with the wrong-doer, whether in Great Britain or in Ireland; and when they are fairly represented in the Imperial Parliament, as I hope they will one day be, they will speedily give an effective and final answer to that old question of the Parliament of Kilkenny—'How comes it to pass that the King has never been the richer for Ireland?'

# IRELAND.

## VII.

### DUBLIN, NOVEMBER 2, 1866.

[This speech was spoken at a public meeting held in Dublin, at which an Address from the Trades was presented to Mr. Bright. James Haughton, Esq., was in the Chair.]

When I came to your city I was asked if I would attend a public meeting on the question of Parliamentary Reform. I answered that I was not in good order for much speaking, for I have suffered, as I am afraid you will find before I come to the end of my speech, from much cold and hoarseness; but it was urged upon me that there were at least some, and not an inconsiderable number, of the working men of this city who would be glad if I would meet them; and it was proposed to offer me some address of friendship and confidence such as that which has been read. I have no complaint to make of it but this, that whilst I do not say it indicates too much kindness, yet that it colours too highly the small services which I have been able to render to any portion of my countrymen. Your countrymen are reckoned generally to be a people of great gratitude and of much enthusiasm, and, therefore, I accept the Address with all the kindness and feelings

of friendship with which it has been offered, and I hope it will be, at least in some degree, a stimulant to me, in whatever position of life I am placed, to remember, as I have ever in past times remembered, the claims of the people of this island to complete and equal justice with the people of Great Britain.

Now, there may be persons in this room, I should be surprised if there were not, who doubt whether it is worth their while even to hope for substantial justice, as this address says, from a Parliament sitting in London. If there be such a man in this room let him understand that I am not the man to condemn him or to express surprise at the opinion at which he has arrived. But I would ask him in return for that, that he would give me at least for a few minutes a patient hearing, and he will find that, whether justice may come from the north or the south, or the east or the west, I, at any rate, stand as a friend of the most complete justice to the people of this island. When discussing the question of Parliamentary Reform, I have often heard it asserted that the people of Ireland, and I am not speaking of those who are hopeless of good from a Parliament in London, but that the people of Ireland generally imagine that the question of Parliamentary Reform has very little importance for them. Now I undertake to say, and I think I can make it clear to this meeting, that whatever be the importance of that question to any man in England or Scotland, if the two islands are to continue under Imperial Parliamentary Government, it is of more importance to every Irishman. You know that the Parliament of which I am a Member contains 658 Members, of whom 105 cross the Channel from Ireland, and when they go to London they meet—supposing all the Members of the House of Commons are gathered together—553 Members who are returned for Great Britain. Now, suppose that all your 105 Members were absolutely good and honourable representatives of the people of Ireland—I will not say Tories, or

Whigs, or Radicals, or Repealers, but anything you like,—let every man imagine that all these Members were exactly the sort of men he would wish to go from Ireland,—when the 105 arrive in London they meet with the 553 who are returned from Great Britain. Now, suppose that the system of Parliamentary representation in Great Britain is very bad, that it represents very few persons in that great island, and that those who appear to be represented are distributed in the small boroughs over different parts of the country, and in the counties under the thumb and finger of the landlords, it is clear that the whole Parliament, although your 105 Members may be very good men, must still be a very bad Parliament. Therefore, if any man imagines—and I should think no man can imagine—that the representation of the people in Ireland is in a very good state—still, if he fancies it is in a good state—unless the representation of Great Britain were at least equally good, you might have a hundred excellent Irish Members in Parliament at Westminster; but the whole 658 Members might be a very bad Parliament for the United Kingdom.

The Member for a borough or a county in Ireland, when he goes to London, votes for measures for the whole kingdom; and a Member for Lancashire or for Warwickshire, or for any other county or borough in Great Britain, votes for measures not only for Great Britain but also for Ireland, and therefore, all parts of the United Kingdom—every county, every borough, every parish, every family, every man—has a clear and distinct and undoubted interest in a Parliament that shall fairly and justly represent the whole nation. Now, look for a moment at two or three facts with regard to Ireland alone. I have stated some facts with regard to England and Scotland at recent meetings held across the Channel.

Now for two or three facts with regard to Ireland. In Ireland you have five boroughs returning each one Member, the average number of electors in each of these boroughs being

only 172. You have 13 boroughs, the average number being 316. You have 9 other boroughs with an average number of electors of 497. You have, therefore, 27 boroughs whose whole number of electors, if they were all put together, is only 9,453, or an average of 350 electors for each Member. I must tell you further that you have a single county with nearly twice as many voters as the whole of those 27 boroughs. Your 27 boroughs have only 9,453 electors, and the county of Cork has 16,107 electors, and returns but two Members. But that is not the worst of the case. It happens both in Great Britain and Ireland, wherever the borough constituencies are so small, that it is almost impossible that they should be independent; a very acute lawyer, for example, in one of those boroughs—a very influential clergyman, whether of your Church or ours—when I say ours, I do not mean mine, but the Church of England—half-a-dozen men combining together, or a little corruption from candidates going with a well-filled purse,—these are the influences brought to bear upon those small boroughs both in England and Ireland. A great many of them return their Members by means of corruption, more or less, and a free and real representation of the people is hardly ever possible in a borough of that small size.

But if I were to compare your boroughs with your counties, see how it stands. You have thirty-nine borough Members, with 30,000 electors, and you have sixty-four county Members, with 172,000 electors. Therefore you see that the Members are so distributed that the great populations have not one quarter of the influence in Parliament which those small populations in the small boroughs have. We come next to another question which is of great consequence. Not only are those small boroughs altogether too small for independence, but if we come to your large county constituencies, we find that from the peculiar circumstances and the relations which exist between the voter and the owner of the land, there is scarcely any freedom of election. Even in your

counties I should suppose that if there was no compulsion from the landowners or their agents, that in at least three-fourths of this island the vote of the county electors would be by a vast majority in favour of the Liberal candidates. I am not speaking merely of men who profess a sort of liberality which just enables them to go with their party, but I speak of men who would be thoroughly in earnest in sustaining, as far as they were able, in Parliament, the opinions which they were sent to represent by the large constituencies who elected them.

The question of the ballot is, in my opinion, of the greatest importance in Great Britain and Ireland, but is of more importance in the counties than it is in the large boroughs. For example: in Great Britain, in such boroughs as Edinburgh and Glasgow, and Manchester and Birmingham, and the metropolitan boroughs, where the number of electors runs from 10,000 to 25,000, bribery is of no avail, because you could not bribe thousands of men. To bribe 100 or 200 would not alter the return at an election with so large a constituency. But what you want with the ballot is, that in the counties where the tenant-farmers vote, and where they live upon their land without the security of a lease, or without the security of any law to give them compensation for any improvements they may have made upon the land, the tenant-farmer feels himself always liable to injury, and sometimes to ruin, if he gets into a dispute with the agent or the landowner with regard to the manner in which he has exercised his franchise. And what will be very important also, if you have the ballot, your elections will be tranquil, without disorder and without riot. Last week, or the week before, there was an election in one of your great counties. Well, making every allowance that can be made for the exaggerations circulated by the writers of the two parties, it is quite clear to everybody that the circumstances of that election, though not absolutely uncommon in Ireland, were still such as to be

utterly discreditable to a real representative system. And you must bear in mind that there is no other people in the world that considers that it has a fair representative system unless it has the ballot. The ballot is universal almost in the United States. It is almost universal in the colonies, at any rate in the Australian colonies; it is almost universal on the continent of Europe, and in the new Parliament of North Germany, which is about soon to be assembled, every man of twenty-five years of age is to be allowed to vote, and to vote by ballot.

Now, I hold, without any fear of contradiction, that the intelligence and the virtues of the people of Ireland are not represented in the Parliament. You have your wrongs to complain of—wrongs centuries old, and wrongs that long ago the people of Ireland, and, I venture to say, the people of Great Britain united with Ireland——My friend up there will not listen to the end of my sentence. I say that the people of Great Britain, acting with the people of Ireland, in a fair representation of the whole, would long ago have remedied every just grievance of which you could complain.

I will take two questions which I treated upon the other evening. I will ask about one question—that is, the question of the supremacy of the Church in Ireland. Half the people in England are Nonconformists. They are not in favour of an Established Church anywhere, and it is utterly impossible that they could be in favour of an Established Church in an island like this—an Established Church formed of a mere handful of the population, in opposition to the wishes of the nation. Now take the Principality of Wales. I suppose that four out of five of the population there are Dissenters, and they are not in favour of maintaining a religious Protestant Establishment in Ireland. The people of Scotland have also seceded in such large numbers from their Established Church, although of a democratic character, that I suppose those who have seceded are a considerable majority

of the whole people—they are not in favour of maintaining an ecclesiastical Establishment in Ireland in opposition to the views of the great majority of your people. Take the other question—that of land. There is nobody in Great Britain of the great town population, or of the middle class, or of the still more numerous working class, who has any sympathy with that condition of the law and of the administration of the law which has worked such mischiefs in your country. But these Nonconformists, whether in England, Wales, or Scotland, these great middle classes, and still greater working classes, are in the position that you are. Only sixteen of every hundred have a vote, and those sixteen are so arranged that when their representatives get to Parliament they turn out for the most part to be no real representatives of the people.

I will tell you fairly that you, as the less populous and less powerful part of this great nation—you of all the men in the United Kingdom, have by far the strongest interest in a thorough reform of the Imperial Parliament, and I believe that you yourselves could not do yourselves such complete justice by yourselves as you can do, by fairly acting with the generous millions of my countrymen in whose name I stand here. You have on this platform two members of the Reform League from London. I received yesterday, or the day before, a telegram from the Scottish Reform League, from Glasgow. I am not sure whether there is a copy of it in any of the newspapers, but it was sent to me, and I presume it was sent to me that I might read it, if I had the opportunity of meeting any of the unenfranchised men of this city. It says:—'The Scottish Reform League request you to convey to the Reformers in Ireland their deep sympathy. They sincerely hope that soon in Ireland, as in Scotland and England, Reform Leagues may be formed in every town to secure to the people their political rights. Urge upon our friends in Ireland their duty to promote this great movement, and to

secure at home those benefits which thousands of their fellow-countrymen are forced to seek in other lands—where land and State Church grievances are unknown. We also seek co-operation, knowing that our freedom, though secure to-morrow, would not be safe so long as one portion of the United Kingdom were less free than the other portions.' There is the outspoken voice of the representatives of that great multitude that only a fortnight since I saw passing through the streets of Glasgow. For three hours the procession passed, with all the emblems and symbols of their various trades, and the streets for two or three miles were enlivened by banners, and the air was filled with the sounds of music from their bands. Those men but spoke the same language that was heard in the West Riding, in Manchester, in Birmingham, and in London; and you men of Dublin, and of Ireland, you never made a mistake more grievous in your lives than when you come to the conclusion that there are not millions of men in Great Britain willing to do you full justice.

I am very sorry that my voice is not what it was, and when I think of the work that is to be done sometimes I feel it is a pity we grow old so fast. But years ago, when I have thought of the condition of Ireland, of its sorrows and wrongs, of the discredit that its condition has brought upon the English, the Irish, and the British name, I have thought, if I could be in all other things the same, but by birth an Irishman, there is not a town in this island I would not visit for the purpose of discussing the great Irish question, and of rousing my countrymen to some great and united action.

I do not believe in the necessity of wide-spread and perpetual misery. I do not believe that we are placed on this island, and on this earth, that one man may be great and wealthy, and revel in every profuse indulgence, and live, six, nine, or ten men shall suffer the abject misery which we see so commonly in the world. With your soil, your climate,

and your active and spirited race, I know not what you might not do. There have been reasons to my mind why soil and climate, and the labour of your population, have not produced general comfort and competence for all.

The Address speaks of the friendly feeling and the sympathy which I have had for Ireland during my political career. When I first went into the House of Commons the most prominent figure in it was Daniel O'Connell. I have sat by his side for hours in that House, and listened to observations both amusing and instructive on what was passing under discussion. I have seen him, too, more than once upon the platforms of the Anti-Corn-law League. I recollect that on one occasion he sent to Ireland expressly for a newspaper for me, which contained a report of a speech which he made against the Corn-law when the Corn-law was passing through Parliament in 1815, and we owe much to his exertions in connection with that question, for almost the whole Liberal—I suppose the whole Liberal—party of the Irish representatives in Parliament supported the measure of free trade of which we were the prominent advocates; and I know of nothing that was favourable to freedom, whether in connection with Ireland or England, that O'Connell did not support with all his great powers. Why is it, now, that there should be any kind of schism between the Liberal people of Ireland and the Liberal people of Great Britain? I do not ask you to join hands with supremacy and oppression, whether in your island or ours. What I ask you is, to open your heart of hearts, and join hands for a real and thorough working union for freedom with the people of Great Britain.

Before I sit down, I must be allowed to advert to a point which has been much commented upon—a sentence in my speech made the other night with regard to the land. There are newspapers in Dublin which I need not name, because I am quite sure you can find them out—which do not feel

any strong desire to judge fairly anything I may propose for the pacification and redemption of the people of Ireland. It was this I said: 'It is of the first importance that the people of Ireland, by some process or other, should have the opportunity of being made the possessors of their own soil.' You will know perfectly well that I am not about to propose a copy of the villainous crimes of two hundred years ago, to confiscate the lands of the proprietors, here or elsewhere. I propose to introduce a system which would gradually, no doubt rapidly and easily, without injuring anybody, make many thousands who are now tenant-farmers, without lease and security, the owners of their farms in this island. This is my plan, and I want to restate it with a little further explanation, in order that these gentlemen to whom I have referred may not repeat the very untrue, and I may say dishonourable comments which they have made upon me.

There are many large estates in Ireland which belong to rich families in England,—families not only of the highest rank, but of the highest character,—because I will venture to say there are not to be found amongst the English nobility families of more perfect honourableness and worth than some of those to whom my plan would be offered; and, therefore, I am not speaking against the aristocracy, against those families, or against property, or against anybody, or against anything that is good. I say, that if Parliament were to appoint a Commission, and give it, say, at first up to the amount of five millions sterling, the power to negotiate or treat with those great families in England who have estates in Ireland, it is probable that some of those great estates might be bought at a not very unreasonable price. I am of opinion that this would be the cheapest money that the Imperial Parliament ever expended, even though it became possessed of those estates at a price considerably above the market price. But I propose it should be worked in this way. I will take a case. I will assume that this Com-

mission is in possession of a considerable estate bought from some present owner of it. I will take one farm, which I will assume to be worth 1,000*l.*, for which the present tenant is paying a rent of 50*l.* a-year. He has no lease. He has no security. He makes almost no improvement of any kind; and he is not quite sure whether, when he has saved a little more money, he will not take his family off to the United States. Now we will assume ourselves, if you like, to be that Commission, and that we have before us the farmer who is the tenant on that particular farm, for which he pays 50*l.* a-year, without lease or security, and which I assume to be worth 1,000*l.* The Government, I believe, lends money to Irish landowners for drainage purposes at about 3½ per cent. per annum. Suppose the Government were to say to this farmer, 'You would not have any objection to become possessed of this farm?' 'No, not the slightest,' he might answer, 'but how is that to be done?' In this way;—You may pay 50*l.* a-year, that is, 5 per cent. on one thousand pounds; the Government can afford to do these transactions for 3½ per cent.; if you will pay 60*l.* a-year for a given number of years, which any of the actuaries of the insurance offices or any good arithmetician may soon calculate,—if you will pay 60*l.* for your rent, instead of 50*l.*, it may be for perhaps twenty years,—at the end of that time the farm will be yours, without any further payment.

I want you to understand how this is. If the farmer paid ten pounds a-year more than he now pays, towards buying his farm, and if the 1,000*l.* the Government would pay for the farm would not cost the Government more than 35*l.*, the difference between 35*l.* and 60*l.* being 25*l.*, would be the sum which that farmer, in his rent, would be paying to the Commission, that is, to the Government, for the redemption of his farm. Thus, at the end of a very few years, the farmer would possess his own farm, having a perfect security in the meantime. Nobody could turn him out if he paid his rent, and

nobody could rob him for any improvement he made on his land. The next morning after he made that agreement, he would explain it to his wife and to his big boy, who had perhaps been idling about for a long time, and there would not be a stone on the land that would not be removed, not a weed that he would not pull up, not a particle of manure that he would not save; everything would be done with a zeal and an enthusiasm which he had never known before; and by the time the few years had run on when the farm should become his without any further purchase, he would have turned a dilapidated, miserable little farm into a garden for himself and family. Now, this statement may be commented on by some of the newspapers. You will understand that I do not propose a forced purchase, or any confiscation. I would undertake even to give—if I were the Government—to every one of these landlords twenty per cent. more for his estate than it will fetch in the market in London or in Dublin, and I say that to do this would produce a marvellous change in the sentiments of the people, and in the condition of agriculture in Ireland.

But I saw in one of the papers a question to which I may give a reply. It was said, How would you like to have a Commission come down into Lancashire and insist on buying your factories? I can only say that if they will give me 20 per cent. or 10 per cent. more than they are worth, they shall have them to-morrow. But I do not propose that the Commission should come here and insist on buying these estates. They say, further, Why should a man in Ireland keep his estate, and not a man in England who has an estate in Ireland? There is this difference. A man in Ireland, if he has an estate of 10,000 acres, has in it probably his ancestral home. He has ties to this which it would be monstrous to think of severing in such a manner. But a man living in England, who is not an Irishman, and who never comes over here except to receive his rents (which, in fact, he generally

receives through his bankers in London), who has no particular tie to this country, and who comes over here occasionally merely because he feels that, as a great proprietor in Ireland, it would be scandalous never to show his face on his property and amongst his tenants—to such a man there would be no hardship if he should part with his land at a fair price.

I have been charged with saying severe things of the English aristocracy. Now, this is not true in the sense in which it is imputed to me. I have always said that there are many men in the English aristocracy who would be noblemen in the sight of their fellow-men although they had no titles and no coronets. There are men amongst them of as undoubted patriotism as any man in this building, or in this island, and there are men amongst them, who when they saw that a great public object was to be gained for the benefit of their fellow-men, would make as great sacrifices as any one of us would be willing to do. I am of opinion therefore —I may be wrong, but I will not believe it until it is proved—I am of opinion that if this question were discussed in Parliament when next the Irish land question is discussed, and if there was a general sentiment in the House of Commons that some measure like this would be advantageous for Ireland,—and if it were so expressed, it may be assumed that it would be accepted to a large extent by the people of the United Kingdom,—then I think that a Commission so appointed would find no difficulty whatever in discovering noblemen and rich men in England, who are the possessors of great estates in Ireland, who would be willing to negotiate for their transfer, and that Commission, by the process I have indicated, might transfer them gradually but speedily to the tenant-farmers of this country.

I am told that I have not been much in Ireland, and do not know much of it. I recollect a man in England during the American war asking me a question about America. When I gave him an answer which did not agree with

his opinion, he said, 'I think you have never been in America, have you?' I said I had not; and he replied, 'Well, I have been there three times, and I know something of them.' He was asking me whether I thought the Yankees would pay when they borrowed money to carry on the war; and I thought they would. But, as he had been there, he thought his opinion was worth more than mine. I told him I knew several people who had lived in England all their lives and yet knew very little about England. I am told that if I were to live in Ireland amongst the people I should have a different opinion; that I should think the State Church of a small minority was honest, in the face of the great Church of the majority; that I should think it was not the fault of the landowners or of the law in any degree, but the fault of the tenants, that everything went wrong with regard to the land; and that I should find that it was the Government that was mostly right, and the legislation right, and that it was the people that were mostly wrong. There are certain questions with regard to any country that you may settle in your own house, never having seen that country even upon a map. This you may settle, that what is just is just everywhere, and that men, from those of the highest culture even to those of the most moderate capacity, whatever may be their race, whatever their colour, have implanted in their hearts by their Creator, wiser much than my critics, the knowledge and the love of justice. I will tell you that, since the day when I sat beside O'Connell—and at an earlier day—I have considered this question of Ireland. In 1849, for several weeks in the autumn, and for several weeks in the autumn of 1852, I came to Ireland expressly to examine this question by consulting with all classes of the people in every part of the island. I will undertake to say that I believe there is no man in England who has more fully studied the evidence given before the celebrated Devon Commission in regard to Ireland than I have. Therefore I dare

stand up before any Irishman or Englishman to discuss the Irish question. I say that the plans, the theories, the policy, the legislation of my opponents in this matter all have failed signally, deplorably, disastrously, ignominiously, and, therefore, I say that I have a right to come in and offer the people of Ireland, as I would offer to the people of Great Britain and the Imperial Parliament, a wise and just policy upon this question.

You know that I have attended great meetings in England within the last two months, and in Scotland also. I think I am at liberty to tender to you from those hundreds of thousands of men the hand of fellowship and goodwill. I wish I might be permitted when I go back, as in fact I think by this Address that I am permitted to say to them, that amidst the factions by which Ireland has been torn, amidst the many errors that have been committed, amidst the passions that have been excited, amidst the hopes that have been blasted, and amidst the misery that has been endured, there is still in this island, and amongst its people, a heart that can sympathise with those who turn to them with a fixed resolution to judge them fairly, and to do them justice.

I have made my speech. I have said my say. I have fulfilled my small mission to you. I thank you from my heart for the kindness with which you have received me, which I shall never forget. And if I have in past times felt an unquenchable sympathy with the sufferings of your people, you may rely upon it that if there be an Irish Member to speak for Ireland, he will find me heartily by his side.

# IRELAND.

## VIII.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 14, 1868.

*From Hansard.*

[This speech was spoken on the occasion of a proposition by Mr. Maguire, M.P. for Cork, for 'a Committee of the whole House to consider the state of Ireland.']

When this debate began it was not my intention to take any part in it; for I had very lately, in another place and to a larger audience, added my contribution to the great national deliberation upon Irish affairs which is now in progress. But the speech of the noble Lord the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and some misunderstanding that has arisen of what I said elsewhere, have changed my intention, and therefore I have to ask for the indulgence of the House, in the hope that I may make on this question a more practical speech than that to which we have just listened.

It is said by eminent censors of the press that this debate will yield about thirty hours of talk, and will end in no result. I have observed that all great questions in this country require thirty hours of talk many times repeated before they are settled. There is much shower and much sunshine between the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the harvest, but the harvest is generally reaped after all.

I was very much struck with what happened on the first night of the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Cork, in the opening portion of his address, described the state of Ireland from his point of view, and the facts he stated are not and cannot be disputed. He said that the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended for three years in his country —that within the island there was a large military force, amounting, as we have heard to-night—besides 12,000 or more of armed police—to an army of 20,000 men—that in the harbours of Ireland there were ships of war, and in her rivers there were gunboats; and that throughout that country—as throughout this—there has been and is yet considerable alarm with regard to the discontent prevalent in Ireland.

All that is quite true; but when the noble Lord the Chief Secretary opened his speech, the first portion of it was of a very different complexion. I am willing to admit that to a large extent it was equally true. He told us that the condition of the people of Ireland was considerably better now than it was at the time of the Devon Commission. At the time of the Devon Commission the condition of that country had no parallel in any civilised and Christian nation. By the force of famine, pestilence, and emigration, the population was greatly diminished, and it would be a very extraordinary thing indeed if with such a diminution of the population there was no improvement in the condition of those who remained behind. He showed that wages are higher, and he pointed to the fact that in the trade in and out of the Irish ports they had a considerable increase, and though I will not say that some of those comparisons were quite accurate or fair, I am on the whole ready to admit the truth of the statement the noble Lord made. But now it seems to me that, admitting the truth of what my hon. Friend the Member for Cork said, and admitting equally the truth of what the noble Lord said, there remains before us a question even more grave than any

we have had to discuss in past years with regard to the condition of Ireland.

If—and this has been already referred to by more than one speaker—if it be true that with a considerable improvement in the physical condition of the people—if it be true that with a universality of education much beyond that which exists in this island—if it be true that after the measures that have been passed, and have been useful, there still remains in Ireland, first of all, what is called Fenianism, which is a reckless and daring exhibition of feeling—beyond that a very wide discontent and disloyalty—and beyond that, amongst the whole of the Roman Catholic population, universal dissatisfaction—and if that be so, surely my hon. Friend the Member for Cork—one of the most useful and eminent of the representatives of Ireland—is right in bringing this question before the House. And there is no question at this moment that we could possibly discuss connected with the interest or honour of the people that approaches in gravity and magnitude to that now before us. And if this state of things be true—and remember I have said nothing but what the hon. Member for Cork has said, and I have given my approval to nothing he has said that was not confirmed by the speech of the noble Lord—if this be true, surely all this great effect must have some cause.

We are unworthy of our position as Members of this House, and representatives of our countrymen, if we do not endeavour at least to discover the cause, and if we can discover it, speedily to apply a remedy. The cause is perfectly well known to both sides of the House. The noble Lord, it is clear, knows it even from the tenor of his own speech—he spoke of the question of the land, and of the Church. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn—whose observations in this debate, if he had offered them, we should have been glad to listen to—understands it, for he referred to the two questions in his speech at the Bristol banquet. The right. hon. Gentleman

at the head of the Government understands it not only as well as I do, but he understands it precisely in the same sense—and more than twenty years ago, when I stated in this House the things, or nearly the things, I stated recently and shall state to-night, he, from your own benches, was making speeches exactly of the same import. And though there is many a thing he seems at times not to recollect, yet I am bound to say he recollects these words, and the impressions, of which these words were the expressions to the House. He referred to an absentee aristocracy and an alien Church. I would not say a syllable about the aristocracy in this matter; if I had to choose a phrase, I would rather say an absentee proprietary and an alien Church.

What is the obvious remedy which for this state of things has been found to be sufficient in every other country? If I could do so by any means that did not violate the rights of property, I should be happy to give to a considerable portion of the farmers of Ireland some proprietary rights, and to remove from that country the sense of injustice, and the sense—the strongest of all—of the injustice caused by the existence of an alien Church. Just for a moment look at the proposition the noble Lord is about to submit to the House. It is very like the Bill of last year. I will not enter into the details, except to say that he proposes, as he proposed then, that the Government should lend the tenant-farmers of Ireland sums of money, by which they would make improvements, which sums of money were to be repaid by some gradual process to the Government authorities. He proposes that the repayment should be spread over a considerable number of years—I do not know the exact number, and it is not of importance for my argument. These tenant-farmers are very numerous—perhaps too numerous, it may be, for the good of the country—but there they are, and we must deal with them as we find them. The number of them holding under 15 acres is 250,000; holding between 15 acres and

30 acres, 136,000; holding over 30 acres, 158,000—altogether there are more than 540,000 holders of land. It is to these 540,000 land-holders or occupiers that the noble Lord proposes to lend money, on the condition that they make certain improvements, and repay after a certain number of years the sums advanced to them. I think I am right in saying that there is no limitation in the Bill as to the smallness of the holding to which the advance of money will be refused; and therefore the whole 540,000 tenants will be in a position to come to the Government, or to some Commission, or to the Board of Works, or to some authority in Ireland, and ask for money to enable them to improve their farms.

The House will see that if this plan is to produce any considerable result, it will be the source of a number of transactions such as the Government have not had to deal with in any other matter; and I expect that the difficulties will be very great, and that the working out of the plan with any beneficial results will be altogether impossible. What I ask the House is this—if it be right of the noble Lord, to enable him to carry out his plan, to ask the House to pass a measure like this—to lend all these tenants the money for improvements to be repaid after a series of years, would it not be possible for us by a somewhat similar process, and by some step farther in the same direction, to establish to some extent—I am not speaking of extending it all through Ireland—a farmer proprietary throughout the country? If it be right and proper to lend money to improve, it surely may be proper, if it be on other grounds judicious, to lend money to buy. I do not know if the right hon. Member for Calne is here; but very likely he would spare me from the severe criticisms he expended upon my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster.

Now, I am as careful as any man can be, I believe, of doing anything by law that shall infringe what you think and what I think are the rights of property. I do not

pretend to believe, if you examine the terms strictly, in what is called the absolute property in land. You may toss a sixpence into the sea if you like, but there are things with respect to land which you cannot, and ought not, and dare not do. But I do not want to argue the question of legislation upon that ground I am myself of opinion that there is no class in the community more interested in a strict adherence to the principles of political economy, worked out in a benevolent and just manner, than the humblest and poorest class in the country. I think they have as much interest in it as the rich, and the House has never known me, and so long as I stand here will never know me, I believe, to propose or advocate anything which shall interfere with what I believe to be, and what if a landowner I would maintain to be, the just right of property in the land.

But, then, I do not think, as some persons seem to think, that the land is really only intended to be in the hands of the rich. I think that is a great mistake. I am not speaking of the poor—for the poor man, in the ordinary meaning of the term, cannot be the possessor of land; but what I wish is, that farmers and men of moderate means should become possessors of land and of their farms. About two centuries ago, two very celebrated men endeavoured to form a constitution for Carolina, which was then one of the colonies of this country in America. Lord Shaftesbury, the statesman, and Mr. Locke, the philosopher, framed a constitution with the notion of having great proprietors all over the country, and men under them to cultivate it. I recollect that Mr. Bancroft, the historian of the United States, describing the issue of that attempt and its utter failure, says: 'The instinct of aristocracy dreads the moral power of a proprietary yeomanry, and therefore the perpetual degradation of the cultivators of the soil was enacted.' There is no country in the world, in which there are only great landowners and tenants, with no large manufacturing interest to absorb the population, in

which the degradation of the cultivating tenant is not completely assured.

I hope that hon. Members opposite, and hon. Gentlemen on this side who may be disposed in some degree to sympathise with them, will not for a moment imagine that I am discussing this question in any spirit of hostility to the landowners of Ireland. I have always argued that the landowners of Ireland, in their treatment of this question, have grievously mistaken not only the interests of the population, but their own. I was told the other day by a Member of this House, who comes from Ireland, and is eminently capable of giving a sound opinion upon the point, that he believed the whole of Ireland might be bought at about twenty years' purchase; but you know that the land of England is worth thirty years' purchase, and I believe a great deal of it much more,—and it is owing to circumstances which legislation may in a great degree remove that the land of Ireland is worth at this moment so much less than the land of England. Coming back to the question of buying farms, I put it to the House whether, if it be right to lend to landlords for improvements, and to tenants for improving the farms of their landlords, to those who propose to carry on public works, and to repair the ravages of the cattle plague, I ask whether it is not also right for them to lend money in cases where it may be advantageous to landlords, and where they may be very willing to consent to it, to establish a portion of the tenant-farmers of Ireland as proprietors of their farms.

Now, bear in mind that I have never spoken about peasant proprietors. I do not care what name you give them; I am in favour of more proprietors, and some, of course, will be small and some will be large; but it would be quite possible for Parliament, if it thought fit to attempt anything of this kind, to fix a limit below which it would not allow the owner to sell or the purchaser to buy. I believe that you can establish a class of moderate

proprietors, who will form a body intermediate between the great owners of land and those who are absolutely landless, which will be of immense service in giving steadiness, loyalty, and peace to the whole population of the island. The noble Lord, the Chief Secretary, knows perfectly well at what price he could lend that money, and I will just state to the House one fact which will show how the plan would work. If you were to lend money at 3½ per cent., in thirty-five years the tenant, paying 5 per cent., would have paid the whole money back and all the interest due on it, and would become the owner of his farm; and if you were to take the rate at which you have lent to the Harbour Commissioners, and to repair the ravages of the cattle plague, which is 3½ per cent., of course the whole sum would be paid back in a shorter period. Therefore, in a term which in former times was not unusual in the length of leases in Ireland, namely, thirty-one years, the tenant purchasing his farm, without his present rent being raised, would repay to the Government the principal and interest of the sum borrowed for that purpose, would become the owner of his farm, and during the whole of that time would have absolute fixity of tenure, because every year he would be saving more and more, adding field to field, and at the end of the time he would be the proprietor of the soil.

Let not the House imagine that I am proposing to buy up the whole of the land. I am proposing only to buy it in cases where men are willing to sell, and to transfer it only in cases where men are able and willing to buy, and you must know as well as I that there will be many thousands of such cases in a few years. Every Irish proprietor opposite—the noble Lord the Member for Tyrone (Lord C. Hamilton) himself, who made so animated a speech, and appeared so angry with me a short time ago—must know perfectly well that amongst the tenantry of Ireland there is a considerable sum of saved money not invested in

farms. Well, that saved money would all come out to carry into effect transactions of this nature; and you would find the most extraordinary efforts made by thousands of tenants to become possessors of their farms by investing their savings in them, by obtaining it may be the assistance of their friends, and by such an industrious and energetic cultivation of the soil as has scarcely ever been seen in Ireland. I said there were landlords willing to sell, and there are cases in which, probably, Parliament might insist upon a sale—for instance, the lands of the London Companies. I never heard of much good that was done by all the money of the London Companies. I was once invited to a dinner by one of these Companies, and certainly it was of a very sumptuous and substantial character, but I believe that, if the tenants of these Companies were proprietors of the lands they cultivate, it would be a great advantage to the counties in which they are situated. I come then to this: I would negotiate with landowners who were willing to sell and tenants who were willing to buy, and I would make the land the great savings-bank for the future tenantry of Ireland. If you like, I would limit the point to which we might go down in the transference of farms, but I would do nothing in the whole transaction which was not perfectly acquiesced in by both landlord and tenant, and I would pay the landlord every shilling he could fairly demand in the market for the estate he proposed to sell.

Well, I hope every Gentleman present will acquit me of intending confiscation, and that we shall have no further misunderstanding upon that point. I venture to say to the noble Lord that this is a plan which would be within compass and management, as compared with that laid down in his Bill, if it worked at all, and I believe that it would do a hundred times as much good, in putting the farmer upon the footing of a holder of land in Ireland. What do hon. Gentlemen think would become of an American Fenian if he came over to

Ireland and happened to spend an evening with a number of men who had got possession of their farms? I remember my old friend Mr. Stafford, in the county of Wexford, whom I called upon in 1849, who had bought his farm and had built upon it the best farm-house which I saw in the whole South of Ireland, and who told me that if all the tenantry of Ireland had security for their holdings—he was an old man, and could not easily rise from his chair, though he made an effort to do so—'If they had the security that I have,' said he, 'we'd *bate* the hunger out of Ireland.' If the Fenian spent his evening with such men as these, and proposed his reckless schemes to them, not a single farmer would listen to him for a moment. Their first impression would be that he was mad; their second, perhaps, that the whisky had been too strong for him; and it would end, no doubt, if he persisted in his efforts to seduce them from their allegiance to the Imperial Government, by their turning him off the premises, though perhaps, knowing that he could do no harm, they might not hand him over to the police.

The other day I passed through the county of Somerset, and through villages that must be well known to many Gentlemen here—Rodney-Stoke and Draytord, I think they were called—and I noticed a great appearance of life and activity about the neighbourhood. I asked the driver of the carriage which had brought me from Wells what was the cause of it. 'Why,' he said, 'don't you know that is the place where the great sale took place?' 'What sale?' I asked. 'Oh! the sale of the Duke's property.' 'What Duke?' 'The Duke of Buckingham. Did you never hear of it? About fifteen years ago his property was sold in lots, and the people bought all the farms. You never saw such a stir in the world.' He pointed out the houses on the hill-side which had been built to replace old tumble-down tenements, the red soil appearing under the plough, and cultivation going on with such general activity as had not been witnessed till within these last few years. The

appearance of these villages was such as must strike every traveller from another part of the country, and it was produced by simple means. The great estate of an embarrassed Duke had been divided and sold off; he had not been robbed; the old miserable hovels of the former tenants had been pulled down, and new life and activity had been given to the whole district. If you could have such a change as this in Ireland, you would see such a progress and prosperity that gentlemen would hardly know the district from which they came.

I think it only fair to my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster to say, that I do not believe the time is come in Ireland, and I do not believe it ever will come, when it will be necessary to have recourse to so vast and extraordinary a scheme as that which he has proposed to the House. It appears to me that it is not necessary for Ireland. There is the land—there is the owner—there is the tenant. If the landowners had been a little wiser we might not have had before us to-night the difficulty that now perplexes us. Suppose, for example, they had not been tempted to coerce or to make use of the votes of their tenants; suppose they had not been tempted to withhold leases—undoubtedly the condition of Ireland would have been far superior to what it now is. My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster has some scruples, I believe, on the question of the ballot, but I believe even he would not object to see that admirable machinery of election tried in that country. Do hon. Gentlemen think it not necessary? I was talking, only two days ago, to a Member of this House who sat on one of the Irish election committees—the Waterford committee, I think—and he said: 'We could not unseat the Members, though the evidence went to show a frightful state of things; it was one of the most orderly elections they have in that country—only three men killed and twenty-eight seriously wounded.' After all, we may smile, and some of you may laugh at this, but it is not a thing to be laughed at. It is

a very serious matter, but it exists in no country in the world where the ballot is in operation.

If you were to try that mode of election in Ireland it would have two results: it would make your elections perfectly tranquil, and at the same time it would withdraw from the landowner—and a most blessed thing for the landowner himself this would be—it would withdraw from him the great temptation to make use of his tenant's vote for the support of his own political party; and if that temptation were withdrawn, you would have much more inducement to grant leases to many of your tenants, and you would take a step highly favourable, not to the prosperity of your tenants only, but to your own prosperity and your own honour. Now, Sir, I shall say no more upon that question except this, that I feel myself at a disadvantage in making a proposition of this nature to a House where landowners are so numerous and so powerful, but I have disarmed them in so far that they will see that I mean them no harm, and that what I propose is not contrary to the principles of political economy; and that if Government is at liberty to lend money for all the purposes to which I have referred, Government must be equally at liberty to lend money for this greater purpose; and, further, I venture to express my opinion, without the smallest hesitation or doubt, that if this were done to the extent of creating some few scores of thousands of farmer proprietors in Ireland, you would find that their influence would be altogether loyal; that it would extend around throughout the whole country; that whilst you were adding to the security of Government you would awaken industry in Ireland from its slumber, and you would have the wealth which you have not had before, and, with wealth, contentment and tranquillity in its train.

Now, Sir, it may appear egotistical in me to make one remark more, but I think if the House will not condemn me I shall make it. Last year you did, under the leadership of the right hon. Gentleman, accept a proposition which

I had taken several years of trouble and labour to convince you was wise. On Wednesday last, only two days ago, by an almost unanimous vote you accepted a proposition with regard to another matter, exactly in the form in which six or seven years ago I had urged you to accept it. You in this House recollect when Mr. Speaker had to give the casting vote, amidst vast excitement in the House, on the miserable question of Church Rates; but now, on Wednesday last, you accepted that Bill almost without opposition; and I presume that, except for the formality of a third reading, we have done with the question for ever. Now if you would kindly, I ask it as a favour—if you would kindly for a moment forget things that you read of me which are not favourable, and generally which are not true, and if you would imagine that though I have not an acre of land in Ireland, I can be as honestly a friend of Ireland as the man who owns half a county, it may be worth your while to consider for your own interest, the interests of your tenants, the security of the country from which you come, for the honour of the United Kingdom, whether there is not something in the proposition that I have made to you.

Now, Sir, perhaps the House will allow me to turn to that other question which, on the authority of the noble Lord the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, and indeed on the authority of the Prime Minister himself, is considered the next greatest—perhaps I ought to have said the greatest—question we have to consider in connection with Irish affairs; I mean the Irish Church question. What is it that is offered upon this matter by the Government? The noble Lord himself said very little about it, but he is not easy upon it; he knows perfectly well, and cannot conceal it, that the Irish Church question is at the root of every other question in Ireland. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn said also that it was, along with the land, the great and solemn question

which we had to discuss, and he turned round—I could discover it from the report in the paper, because I was not, as you may suppose, at the Bristol banquet—he turned round almost with a look of despair, and implored somebody to come and tell us what ought to be done on this Irish question. And the Prime Minister himself, in speaking of it, called it an 'Alien Church.' Bear that phrase in mind. It is a strong phrase, a phrase we can all understand, and we know that the right hon. Gentleman is a great master of phrases—he says a word upon some subject; it sticks; we all remember it, and this is sometimes a great advantage. 'Alien Church' is the name he gives it; and now, what does the noble Lord, acting, no doubt, under the direction of his Colleagues and the Prime Minister, offer upon this question? He rather offered a defence of it; he did not go into any argument, but still, at the same time, he rather defied anybody to make an assault upon it; he believed that it would not succeed, and that it was very wrong; but what does he really propose? Only this: to add another buttress in the shape of another bribe. He says that he will make an offer to the Roman Catholic hierarchy and people of Ireland—some say that the people do not want it, and that the hierarchy do want it, but I say nothing about that, because I hope the Catholic people of Ireland are at least able to defend themselves from the hierarchy, if the hierarchy wish to cripple them too much—he says he will endow a Roman Catholic University in Ireland. As the noble Lord went on with his speech he touched upon the question of the Presbyterian *Regium Donum*, and spoke of it, I think, as a miserable provision for the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland; and evidently, if he had had the courage, the desperate courage to do it, he would have proposed, whilst he was offering to endow a new Roman Catholic University, to increase or double the *Regium Donum*. The noble Lord does not express any dissent from this, and I rather think he

wishes that it were safely done. The object of this, and what he would like to have said to the hon. Gentlemen about him who came from Ireland to represent the Roman Catholic population, and to the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, was this: 'If you will continue to support the Protestant Church in Ireland and the Protestant supremacy, we will endow you (the Roman Catholics) a University, really, if not professedly, under clerical rule; and as to you (the Presbyterians), we will double your stipends by doubling the amount of the *Regium Donum*.'

Now, why do you offer anything? Why is it we are discussing this question? Why did the noble Lord think it necessary to speak for three hours and twenty minutes on the subject? Because the state of Ireland is now very different from the state which we have sometimes seen, and very different, I hope, from that which many of us may live to see hereafter; because Ireland has a certain portion of its population rebellious, has a larger portion disloyal and discontented, but has a still larger portion dissatisfied with the Imperial rule. Now I must say —I hope the noble Lord will not think I am saying anything uncivil—but I must say that his proposition appears to be at once grotesque and imbecile, and I think at the same time—though I do not like to use unpleasant words—that to a certain extent it must be held to be—in fact, I think the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Warwickshire hinted as much—not only very wrong, but very dishonest. At this moment it seems to find no favour on either side of the House, although I can understand the Catholic Members of the House feeling themselves bound to say nothing against it, and perhaps, if it came to a division, to vote for it; but I believe there is not a Catholic Member on this side of the House who could in his conscience say that it was right in him to accept this proposition as a bribe that he should hereafter support

Protestant supremacy. In fact, it appears to me exactly in the position now that the dual vote was in this time twelve months, and there are people who say that it has been brought forward with the same object, and that by-and-by, as nobody is for it, the right hon. Gentleman will say that as nobody is in favour of it they will not urge it upon Parliament. Now, does anybody believe that a Catholic University in Ireland could have the smallest effect upon Fenianism, or upon the disloyalty, discontent, and dissatisfaction of which Fenianism is the latest and the most terrible expression? It is quite clear that for the evil which we have to combat, the remedy which the right hon. Gentleman offers through the Chief Secretary for Ireland is no remedy at all.

It reminds me of an anecdote which is related by Addison. He says that in his time there was a man who made a living by cheating the country people. He was not a Cabinet Minister,—he was only a mountebank,—and he set up a stall, and sold pills that were very good against the earthquake. Well, that is about the state of things that we are in now. There is an earthquake in Ireland. Does anybody doubt it? I will not go into the evidence of it, but I will say that there has been a most extraordinary alarm—some of it extravagant, I will admit—throughout the whole of the three kingdoms; and although Fenianism may be but a low, a reckless, and an ignorant conspiracy, the noble Lord has admitted that there is discontent and disaffection in the country; and when the Member for one of the great cities of Ireland comes forward and asks the Imperial Parliament to discuss this great question—this social and political earthquake under which Ireland is heaving—the noble Lord comes forward and offers that there shall be a clerical-governed endowed University for the sons, I suppose, of the Catholic gentlemen of Ireland. I have never heard a more unstatesmanlike or more unsatisfactory proposi-

tion; and I believe the entire disfavour with which it has been received in this House is only a proper representation of the condemnation which it will receive from the great majority of the people of the three kingdoms.

Do not let any one suppose that I join in the terms which I regretted to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud, and still less that I join in the, in my opinion, more offensive terms which fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. There can be no good in our attacking either the Catholic population or the Catholic hierarchy of Ireland. We have our duty straight before us, which is to do both the hierarchy and the people justice. We are not called upon to support the plan of the Government, and I believe the people of Great Britain, and a very large portion of the people of Ireland, will rejoice when the House of Commons shall reject a proposition which is adverse to the course we have taken for many years past, and a proposition which would have no better effect in tranquillising Ireland in the future than the increase of the grant to Maynooth did more than twenty years ago. Sir Robert Peel at that time, with the most honourable and kindly feeling to Ireland, proposed to increase the grant to Maynooth, and it was passed, I think, by a large majority of the House, I being one of a very few persons on this side of the House who opposed the grant. I was as kindly disposed to the Catholics of Ireland as Sir Robert Peel, but I was satisfied that was not the path of tranquillisation, and that if he trod that path it would before any long time have to be retraced; and I think, if you now proceed upon the course recommended by the right hon. Gentleman, you will fail in the pacification of Ireland, and the time will come when you will have to retrace the steps he invites you to tread in now.

Now, Sir, I think we have arrived at this point of the question—that we have absolutely arrived at it, and there is no escape from it—that it does not matter in the least

whether the right hon. Gentleman sits on the Treasury Bench, or whether the right hon. Member for South Lancashire takes his place, or whether the two should unite—which is a very bold figure of speech—but I say that if the two should unite, it could not alter this fact, that the Protestant supremacy, as represented by a State Church in Ireland, is doomed, and is, in fact, at an end. Whatever are the details, and I admit that they will be very difficult details in some particulars, which may be introduced into the measure which shall enact the great change that the circumstances of Ireland and the opinion of the United Kingdom have declared to be necessary, this, at least, we have come to, that perfect religious equality henceforth, and not only religious equality, but equality on the voluntary principle, must be granted.

Some hon. Gentlemen opposite have spoken about a pamphlet which has recently been written by Lord Russell. I would speak of Lord Russell, as the House knows, as I would always of a man older than myself, and whose services to the country have been so long and so great; I speak of him with great respect, and I say that the pamphlet is written with wonderful fire, that it contains in it very much that is interesting, and very much that is true, but its one fault is that it should have been published about forty years ago. Lord Russell's proposition is politically just in the division which he proposes of the property of the Church in Ireland, and, if public opinion had not condemned the creation of new Established Churches, it might have been possible to have adopted his scheme as it is. But I say the time has gone by for the establishment of new State Churches. They will never again be planted as an institution in this country, and I suspect there is no other country in the world which has not an Established Church that would wish to possess one. But, if the House will allow me, I should like to advert to a little scheme on this matter which I was bold enough to explain to my countrymen on the occasion to which I have referred.

It is not a new scheme in my mind, for the whole principle of it, with an elaborate argument in its favour, were published very widely in the year 1852, in a letter which I wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray), who was one of certain persons, Members of Parliament and others, who met in conference in Dublin on the question of religious equality in Ireland. I only state this to show that it is no new idea, and that I have had plenty of time to consider it. There have been great objections to the plan, and amongst those who have objected to it, as might possibly have been expected, were gentlemen of the Liberation Society. Now, I know many of the leading members of that Society, and they are very good men. Even those who may think they are mistaken would, if they knew them, join with me in that opinion. One of them, at least, who was once a Member of this House, and, in all probability, will be here again—Mr. Miall—is not only a good man, but he is a great man. I judge him by the nobleness of his principles, and by the grand devotion which he has manifested to the teaching of what he believes to be a great truth. I take criticisms from them kindly, as we ought to take them from our friends when they are honestly given.

What is the condition of Ireland at this moment with which you have to deal? There is not only the Church which it is proposed to disestablish, but you have the *Regium Donum*, which, if the Church be disestablished, must necessarily be withdrawn; and you have, if these two things happen, a grant to Maynooth, the Act conferring which must necessarily be repealed. Now, in doing these things the House will observe that we shall disturb all the three principal sects or Churches in Ireland, and we can only do it, or attempt to do it, on the ground that we are about to accomplish some great public good. Well, my proposal, which some hon. Gentlemen, I dare say, will have some vague idea of, was made with the view of easing Parliament

in the great transaction, from which I believe it cannot escape. It is a great thing in statesmanship, when you are about to make a change which is inevitable, and which shocks some, disturbs more, and makes hesitating people hesitate still more—it is a great thing, I say, if you can make the past slide into the future without any great jar, and without any great shock to the feelings of the people. And in doing these things the Government can always afford to be generous and gracious to those whom they are obliged to disturb.

We have found that this has been the case when needful changes have been proposed; for instance, hon. Gentlemen will recollect, when tithe commutation for Ireland was passed, that there was a certain concession made to the landowners of Ireland, to induce them to acquiesce in the proposition of Parliament. We know that when slavery was abolished a considerable sum of money was voted. Lord Derby proposed in this House that compensation should be given to the slave-owners. If it had not been for that, slavery would before long have been abolished by violence. But Parliament thought it was much better to take the step it did take, and I am not, at this period of time, about for a moment to dispute its wisdom. In all these things we endeavour, if we are forced to make a great change, to make it in such a manner as that we shall obtain the acquiescence and the support, if possible, of those who are most likely to be nearly affected by it. Suppose we were going to disestablish the Church of Scotland—and I understand that there are a great number belonging to the Established Church of Scotland who are coming round to the opinion that it would be much to their benefit, and I think for the benefit of their Church, if it were disestablished—if we were going to disestablish the Church of Scotland or the Church of England, no person for a moment would suppose that, after having taken all the tithes and all the income from these Churches, you would also take all the

churches and all the parsonage-houses from the Presbyterian people of Scotland, or from the Episcopal Church people in England. You would not do anything of that kind. You would do to them as we should wish, if we were in their position, that the Government and Parliament should do to us. Do what you have to do thoroughly for the good of the country, but do it in such a manner as shall do least harm, and as shall gain the largest amount of acquiescence from those whom you are about to affect. I venture to say that such is the course we should take about Ireland.

I am very free in speaking on these matters. I am not a Catholic in the sense of Rome. I am not a Protestant in the sense in which that word is used in Ireland. I am not connected with a powerful sect in England. I think, from my training, and education, and association, and thought on these questions, I stand in a position which enables me to take as fair and unimpassioned a view of the matter as perhaps any man in the House. Now, if I were asked to give my advice, and if I am not asked I shall give it—I should propose that where there are congregations in Ireland—I am speaking now, of course, of the present Established Church – who would undertake to keep in repair the church in which they have been accustomed to worship, and the parsonage-house in which their ministers live, Parliament should leave them in the possession of their churches and of their parsonage-houses. And I believe I speak the sentiment of every Catholic Member on this side of the House, and probably of every intelligent Catholic in Ireland, not only of the laity but of the hierarchy and the priesthood, when I say that they would regard such a course as that on the part of Parliament as just, under the circumstances in which we are placed. Well, then, of course there would be no more bishops appointed by the Crown, and that institution in Ireland would come to an end, except it were continued upon the principle upon which bishops are appointed in Scotland. All State connection

would be entirely abolished. You would then have all alike. The Protestants would have their churches and parsonage-houses as they have now. But the repairs of them, and the support of their ministers, would be provided by their congregations, or by such an organisation as they chose to form. The Catholics would provide, as they have hitherto done so meritoriously and with a remarkable liberality, for themselves.

No greater instance of generosity and fidelity to their Church can be seen in the world than that which has been manifested by the Catholic people of Ireland. They have their churches and their priests' houses in many places. There is no pretence for meddling with them. In the north of Ireland, where the Presbyterians are most numerous, they would also have their places of worship, and their ministers' houses as they have now. All the Churches, therefore, in that respect would be on an equality. Well, now, the real point of this question, and which will create in all probability much feeling in Parliament and in the country, is, what should be done on the question of the Maynooth Grant, and on the question of the *Regium Donum?* They must be treated alike, I presume. If you preserve the life interests of the ministers and bishops of the Established Church, it may be right to preserve the life interests of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church, and it may be right also in some way or other to make some provision that shall not in the least degree bring them under the control of the State. And some provision might have to be made to the Catholic Church in lieu of the Maynooth Grant, which, of course, you would be obliged to withdraw. These are points which I will not discuss in detail. I merely indicate them for the sake of showing to the House, and to a great number of people who are regarding it with even more feeling than we do, what are some of the difficulties of this question—difficulties which must be met—difficulties which it will require all the modern-

tion, all the Christian feeling, and all the patriotism which this House can muster on both sides of it, with the view of settling this question permanently, and to the general satisfaction of the three kingdoms. Now, I will go no further, but to say that whatever is done—if a single sixpence is given by Parliament, in lieu of the Maynooth Grant, or in lieu of the *Regium Donum*, it must be given on these terms only—and on that matter I think Lord Russell has committed a great error—that it becomes the absolute property of the Catholics or of the Presbyterians—it must be as completely their property as the property of the great Wesleyan body in this country, or of the Independents, or of the Baptists, belongs to these bodies. It must be property which Parliament can never pretend to control, or regulate, or withdraw.

And having consented to that condition, the three Churches of Ireland would be started as voluntary Churches, and instead of fighting, as I am sorry to say they have been fighting far longer than within the memory of man, I hope soon there would be a competition among them which should do most for the education, the morals, and the Christianity of the population who are within their instruction and guidance. Now, Protestants in this country—I think almost all Protestants—object very strongly to Rome. The Nonconformists object to endowments. They sometimes, I think, confound establishments with endowments. I think it absolutely essential that establishments should cease, and that there should be nothing in the way of endowment unless it be some small provision such as that which I have indicated; which it might be necessary to make when you are withdrawing certain things which the Churches in Ireland had supposed were theirs in perpetuity.

Now, one word which I would say to the Nonconformist people of England and Scotland, if the House will allow me to speak, is this—they should bear in mind that the

whole of this property which is now in the possession of the Established Church of Ireland is Irish property. It does not belong to Scotland or to England, and it would be a measure intolerable and not to be thought of, that it should be touched or dealt with in any manner that is not in accordance with the feelings and the interests of the people of Ireland. Let any man who to-morrow criticises this part of my speech ask himself what an Irish Parliament freely elected would do with the ecclesiastical funds of Ireland. I think the Presbyterians of Scotland, the Churchmen and Nonconformists of England, have no right to suppose themselves to be judges with regard to religious matters in Ireland. They have a perfect right to say to Parliament through their representatives, 'We will discontinue the State Church in Ireland, and we will create no other State Churches.' But that seems to be about the extent of the interference which they are entitled to in this matter.

I hope I have explained with tolerable clearness the views which I have felt it my duty to lay before the House on the occasion of this great question. The House will see, and I think hon. Gentlemen opposite will admit, that I am at least disposed to treat it as a great question which, if it be dealt with, should be dealt with in the most generous, gracious, and, if you like, tender manner by Parliament, as respects the feelings and interests of all who are most directly concerned. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, in his speech last night, said that this proposal to disestablish the Established Church of Ireland was, in point of fact, in some sort a revolution. This, at any rate, I am satisfied, would be not only an entirely bloodless revolution, but a revolution full of blessing to the Irish people.

I have not said a word—I never said a word in this House, and, I believe, never out of it, to depreciate the character of the clergymen of the Established Church in Ireland. I think

no religious ministers are placed in a more unfortunate position, and I am satisfied that many of them feel it to be so. I have not the least doubt, when this transaction is once accomplished, that they will breathe more freely. I believe they will be more potent in their ministrations, and that their influence, which must, or ought to be, considerable, will be far more extensive than it has been, and far more beneficial in the districts in which they live. But being so great a question, as the Home Secretary described it, it can only be settled by mutual and reasonable concession. The main principle being secured, that State Church supremacy is abolished in Ireland, and that the Irish Churches are henceforth to be free Churches upon the voluntary principle, then I should be willing, and I would recommend every person in the country whom my voice may reach, to make any reasonable concession that can be suggested in the case. So anxious am I that it should be done, that I should be delighted to co-operate with the right hon. Gentleman, and with hon. Members on the opposite side of the House, in support of any just measure for settling this great question. But I say, if it ever does come to be dealt with by a great and powerful Minister, let it be dealt with in a great and generous spirit. I would counsel to all men moderation and justice. It is as necessary to Protestants as to Catholics and to Nonconformists that they should endeavour to get rid of passion in discussing this question.

We are, after all, of one religion. I imagine that there will come a time in the history of the world when men will be astonished that Catholics and Protestants have had so much animosity against and suspicion of each other. I accept the belief in a grand passage, which I once met with in the writings of the illustrious founder of the colony of Pennsylvania. He says that 'The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the mask they will know one

another, though the diverse liveries they wear here make them strangers.' Now, may I ask the House to act in this spirit, and then our work will be easy. The noble Lord, towards the conclusion of his speech, spoke of the cloud which rests at present over Ireland. It is a dark and heavy cloud, and its darkness extends over the feelings of men in all parts of the British Empire. But there is a consolation which we may all take to ourselves. An inspired king and bard and prophet has left us words which are not only the expression of a fact, but which we may take as the utterance of a prophecy. He says, 'To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.' Let us try in this matter to be upright. Let us try to be just. That cloud will be dispelled. The dangers which surround us will vanish, and we may yet have the happiness of leaving to our children the heritage of an honourable citizenship in a united and prosperous Empire.

# IRELAND.

## IX.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 1, 1868.

[This speech was made in the debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions for disestablishing the Irish Church.]

THE House will not expect me to follow the legal argument of the hon. and learned Member who has just sat down. I entertain a firm belief that those legal cobwebs which are spread, and which are supposed to, and do in the minds of many Gentlemen, interpose between the completion of a great act of justice, will be swept away before long by the almost unanimous opinion of the people of the three kingdoms.

During this debate, which has yet lasted only two nights, there has been, if not a remarkable change of opinion, a remarkable change of expression. Last night we had an interesting speech from the noble Lord who generally sits opposite me, the noble Lord the Member for Stamford. I refer only to the beginning of his speech, in which he spoke of his affection for the principle of a Church Establishment. There was a hesitation in his manner; he had a strong love for his principle, but it appeared to me that he thought the

time was come when even that cherished principle would have to be surrendered. From the Treasury bench we had a speech from the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and when he sat down it is difficult to say what was the precise impression made upon the House; but I think, on the whole, the impression made on the other side of the House—his own side—was by no means a comfortable one. Now to me it is, and I think to the House it is, a misfortune that we have a Government that speaks with a different voice from night to night. We had it last year, and I presume, from the example of the debate which lately took place on the motion of the hon. Member for Cork, and from the debate on this motion, we are about to see a repetition of it.

The fact is, that the position of the Government is one of great difficulty and perplexity; to speak plainly, it is one which I should call, in our Constitutional system, altogether unnatural. They are the Ministers, the leaders of a minority of the House, and whilst they sat as leaders of the minority in opposition they defended the principles of their party, and they apparently regarded all their past career with satisfaction; but the moment they are transferred to the Treasury bench they find themselves in this difficulty, that although their party may still wish to cling to their past opinions, there is something in the very air, there is something throughout the mind of the whole kingdom, which teaches them that their past opinions are impossible in their new position.

The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn made a speech not long ago at Bristol, and in that speech he expressed what I am quite sure were his honest opinions with regard to the condition of Ireland. He stated that the condition of Ireland was one painful and dangerous, and to us, in appearance at least, discreditable. He said we had a strange and perplexing problem to solve; that in Ireland there was a miserable state of things. Then he said, 'If

we look for a remedy, who can give us an intelligible answer? Ireland is the question of the hour.' And that is not altogether at variance—in fact, I should say not at all at variance—with the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who told us, as far as he knew, the facts about his country. But immediately afterwards we had the description of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, to the effect that there was no crisis at all—that, in point of fact, the condition of Ireland was a normal condition, and that there was no necessity for anything remarkable or unusual in the legislation that was required. Now, to-night we have had a speech from the Home Secretary. I may say that every speaker on that side of the House has admitted that his speech is entirely in opposition, in its tone, its purpose, and its principle, to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn. It seems to me that the Home Secretary to-night answered the Foreign Secretary of last night—and I suppose if the debate goes on until Thursday, probably the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, or perhaps the Secretary of State for India, will answer the speech of the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

But all this shows us that the House is in a wrong position. We have a minority in office which cannot assert its own views with safety, nor can it with any more safety directly adopt our views; and thus, when, on that side of the House, a Minister gets up and makes what is called a liberal speech on this question to us who are in opposition, that creates discontent; and then another Minister rises and makes a speech of an exactly opposite character, to reconcile that discontent. There is, in fact, confusion and chaos in the House. We have a Government which is not a Government—and we have an Opposition which is not an Opposition, because really we do not oppose anything that you propose. Your propositions are not based upon your own principles,

which you held when you sat on this side of the House, but on our principles, and therefore we are not in opposition at all, but we help you as much as possible to enforce, not your own principles, but ours. Whatever compensation it may be to right hon. Gentlemen who sit on that bench and enjoy the dignities and emoluments of office, I think there are many honourable men on whom I am looking at this moment who do not observe the course of these proceedings with entire satisfaction.

But now, notwithstanding these difficulties, there remains this great question which we must discuss, and which, if possible, we must settle. I say, notwithstanding some observations to the contrary, that the people of the three kingdoms are looking with anxious suspense at the course which Parliament may take on this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on one occasion spoke of this question, of this proposition, as being something in the nature of a revolution. But, if it be a revolution, after all it is not so great a one as we might suppose from the force and energy of the speech which he has delivered to-night—a speech which, although I differ from his views, was, I must say, a very good speech—in which he brought into the House a good deal of the energy of the people of that great county (Yorkshire) from which he comes. But we are now about to deal with a question which only affects, according to the census, something under 700,000 people. I observe hon. Gentlemen talk of the Protestants of Ireland as being one-fourth of the whole population—of being a million and a half. All that is fanciful exaggeration. According to the census the Episcopalians are not more than 700,000, and let hon. Gentlemen bear this in mind—when the census enumerators go round, if a man is not a Catholic or a Presbyterian, he is put down, unless he can state he is of some other sect, as an Episcopalian. And judging from what we know, there must be out of the 700,000 a considerable

number who never go to church, and, politically or religiously, have no interest in it. Therefore, I believe, speaking correctly, it would not be possible to show that there are Episcopalians in Ireland in intimate connection with the Established Church to the amount of more than from half a million to 600,000.

Now, this will not come to more than 100,000 families, that is, will not be very much more than the population of Liverpool, or Manchester, or Glasgow; so that, in point of fact, this question, which is held to be a revolution,—this great question affects only a population equal to that of the city of Glasgow, or of Liverpool, or of Manchester. And it is for a population so small as this, I am told—for I am not versed in computations of this kind—you have no less than twelve bishops and archbishops, and that you have devoted for their services—for their religious services—not less than the annual income arising from a capital sum estimated to be, at least, ten or twelve millions sterling. Now, if their system of teaching is really very good, I must say there ought to be in Ireland a more perfectly moral and religious population among the Church Protestants than there is in any other country in the world.

What, then, are we about to do? What is the House about to do if we adopt the resolutions of the right hon. Member for South Lancashire? If the House accept the advice of the majority sitting on this side, what will be done? We are not going to commit any vital wrong upon that one city population of 500,000 or 600,000. When we have done everything that I have suggested should be done, we shall leave them in as comfortable a position as the majority of the people of Scotland are in at this moment. We shall leave them as well off as eight or nine-tenths of the population of Wales are; we shall leave them as well off as half, and not the least religious half, of the people of England are; we shall leave them as well off as the English, Scotch, Welsh,

and Irish people who form the population in our colonies, whether in North America or Australia. And what can be more monstrous than for Gentlemen to come here from Ireland—and there may be some from England—and tell us we are bringing about a revolution, that we are committing an enormous oppression, that we are hazarding the loyalty of the people of the North of Ireland, when, after all, the most and worst which any of us proposes to do is that the Church population of Ireland will be left at least as well off as any of the various populations of the Empire I have just described? I hope hon. Gentlemen opposite will be convinced that it is not a bottomless abyss we are going to plunge their friends into.

Although it is a very small question for the Church in Ireland and for the Church people, I hold it is an infinitely larger question for the Catholic population. The hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke last relies much upon law. I suppose it will be admitted that there are only two pretences on which this State Church—the Protestant Church—can exist in Ireland. The one is religious—the other is political. Now, has anybody been able to show that, as a religious institution, it has not been a deplorable failure? because clearly, the original intention, the original hope was, that the people of Ireland would be drawn from the Church of Rome and brought into harmony with the Church of England. I undertake to say, from the time of its first establishment until now, reckoning up all the Catholics on the one side and the Protestants on the other, that it could not be shown, and is not to be believed, that it has ever added really one person in every hundred persons to the actual number of Protestants in the kingdom of Ireland. It has been an entire failure—a failure deplorable, and almost ludicrous, as an engine for converting the Catholic population. But it has not only not made Catholics into Protestants, but it has made Catholics in Ireland more intensely Roman than

the members of that Church are found to be in any other country in Europe or in America. And what is more than that, I think it can be demonstrated that the existence of the Protestant Church in Ireland, whether missionary or not in pretence, has not only not converted the Catholics themselves, but has made it absolutely impossible that anybody else, or any other Church, should convert them. Because, if you look how the Church has been connected with the State, and with the politics of the country, with the supremacy of the landed proprietors, with the supremacy of the Protestant party, with all the dark records of the past, you will see the effect has been to make Catholicism in Ireland not only a faith, but absolutely a patriotism.

I think I might appeal to every Member of the House who now hears me whether, if he had been placed in Ireland with his father before him among the Catholic population—I might ask him whether he would not have felt that if he threw off his allegiance to his Church, and if he entered the portals of this garrison Church, that it would have been to him not only a change of faith, but a denial as it were of his birth and of his country. I have felt always in considering this question —and I have considered it much for twenty-five years past — that all the circumstances of that Church in Ireland have been such as to stimulate the heart of every Catholic to a stronger adherence to his own faith, and to a determined and unchangeable rejection of the faith and of the Church which were offered to him by the hands of conquest. There is one point on this, too, which is important, that the more you have produced dissatisfaction with Imperial rule in Ireland, the more you have thrown the population into the hands of Rome. Now, I hope I shall offend no Catholic Member in this House when I say that I consider it one of the greatest calamities of the world that there are in many countries millions of Catholic population who are liable to be directed in much of their conduct, and often in their poli-

tical conduct, through their bishops and clergy from the centre of the city of Rome. I think that is a misfortune—I think it is a misfortune to the freedom of the world. And I think, moreover, that it is a misfortune to every Catholic Church in every country, for it tends to prevent it from being wholly national, and it prevents also such changes and such reformations as, I believe, are necessary in the progress of every Church. We see some result of this in other countries of Europe. Notably, at this moment, in Austria, even in that country which we lately thought was the very last in the race of freedom, there is a contest going on with Rome. But there probably is no country in Europe at this moment in which the Catholic Church and population are more entirely subject than in Ireland to the direct influence of a certain number of persons, of whom most of us know nothing, who pull the strings of the Catholic world in the city of Rome. I attribute much of this, which I think a great evil, to the existence of the Protestant Church in Ireland. You know perfectly well that the great discontent of Ireland is chiefly entertained by the Catholic population, and you know that this population is even at this moment, more than it was some years ago, subject directly to political influences from Rome. But I am satisfied that it is for the interest of the Catholic population, and that it is for the interest of this great nation and of this Imperial Government, that whatsoever be the tie between the Catholic population of Ireland and the Government in Ireland, we ought at least to take away every obstacle that can lessen in the smallest degree the loyalty of that people to the Imperial Crown.

And if this Church has failed as a religious institution, how stands it as a political institution? It was intended not only to convert the Catholics, but to secure the Union. An hon. Gentleman, with a courage that I should not like to imitate, said that if the 5th Article of the Act of Union

should be altered, then in point of fact the Union is as good as abolished. I see the hon. Gentleman up there, and I think he is not the only one who has said it in the course of this discussion. It is a very old and not a very strange device to expect the people to be made loyal through the instrumentality of the clergy. I know that many centuries ago a monk of some celebrity at the Court of Louis of Bavaria told that monarch, 'You defend me with the sword, and I will defend you with the pen.' We have been during all this time defending this Church with the sword. The sword has scarcely ever been out of the hand of the governing power in Ireland. And if a fair, simple, and unadorned narrative were given of the transactions of this Parliament with Ireland, with regard to its different enactments, coercive restrictions, suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, and so forth, it would form a narrative which would astonish the world and would discredit us. Sir, I am afraid it is not too much to say that, in support of this supremacy, many victims have perished on the scaffold in Ireland, and that the fields of Ireland have been more than once drenched with the blood of her people. But, after all this is done, we are not a bit more secure.

It is no matter what Government sits on the bench opposite. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire was there two years ago, and on that occasion, by the consent of his Colleagues, the then Home Secretary had to introduce the Bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Now you are on that side of the House, and you have to do the same. Nobody says it is not necessary. I am not prepared to say it has not been necessary at other times. But surely if this be necessary—and if there is this painful duty to perform at various times—it shows that the Union is not very secure in Ireland. In fact, Sir, it is the most painful thing that we have witnessed lately, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act has become so common that it causes almost no remark. The measure is introduced

into the House. An Irish Member makes a feeble protest against it, and it is passed, and we suspend the liberties of one of the three kingdoms from year to year. And the Prime Minister has the courage—I might almost use another word—he has the courage to say there is no crisis, and that things are going on very much as usual, and that the House of Commons is not required to do much or care much for that country.

What you have in Ireland is this. There is anarchy, which is subdued by force, and after centuries of rule—not our rule, but that of our forefathers—we have got no further. We have not reconciled Ireland to us, we have done none of those things which the world says we ought to have done; and at this moment—in the year 1868—we are discussing the question whether it is possible to make any change with reference to the Established Church in Ireland which will bring about a better state of feeling between the people and the Imperial Government. Sir, I am afraid there has been very little statesmanship and very much neglect, and I think we ought to take shame to ourselves, and try to get rid of some of our antiquated prejudices on this matter, and look at it as men would look at it from a distance, as men whose vision is not impaired by the passionate feelings which have so often prevailed in this country with regard to this question. What, then, is the remedy that is now offered? What do people say of it? Now, I challenge any hon. Gentleman on the other side to deny this, that out of half a million Episcopalians in Ireland there are many—there are some in the Irish nobility, some landed proprietors, some magistrates, even some of the clergy, a great many Irishmen—who believe at this moment that it is of the very first importance that the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire should be carried.

I am not going to overstate my case. I do not say that all of them are of that opinion. Of that half-million, say that

one-fourth—I will state no number—but of this I am quite certain, that there is an influential, a considerable, and, as I believe, a wise minority, who are in favour of distinct and decided action on the part of Parliament with regard to this question. But if you ask the whole Roman Catholic population of Ireland, be they nobles, or landed proprietors, or merchants, or farmers, or labourers,—the whole number of the Catholic population in Ireland being, I suppose, eight or nine times the number of Episcopalians—these are probably, without exception, of opinion that it would be greatly advantageous and just to their country if the proposition submitted on this side of the House should receive the sanction of Parliament. Now, if some Protestants and all Catholics are agreed that we should remove this Church, what would happen if Ireland was 1,000 miles away, and we were discussing it as we might discuss the same state of affairs in Canada? If we were to have in Canada and in Australia all this disloyalty among the Roman Catholic population, owing to the existence of a State Church there, the House would be unanimous that the State Church in those colonies should be abolished, and that perfect freedom in religion should be given.

But there is a fear in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that the malady which would exist in Ireland might cross the Channel and appear in England; that in fact the disorder of Voluntaryism, as he deems it, in Ireland, like any other contagious disorder, might cross the Channel, by force of the west wind, lodging first in Scotland, and then crossing the Tweed and coming south to England. I think the right hon. Gentleman went so far as to say that he was so much in favour of religious equality, that if you went so far as to disestablish the Church in Ireland, he would recommend the same policy for England. Now, with regard to that, I will give you an anecdote which has reference to Scotland. Some years ago I had the pleasure of spending some

days in Scotland at the house of the late Lord Aberdeen, after he had ceased to be Prime Minister. He was talking of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, and he said that nothing in the course of his public life had given him so much pain as the disruption, and the establishment of the Free Church in that country; but he said he had lived long enough to discover that it was one of the greatest blessings that had ever come to Scotland. He said that they had a vast increase in the number of churches, a corresponding increase in the number of manses or ministers' houses, and that schools had increased, also, to an extraordinary extent; that there had been imparted to the Established Church a vitality and energy which it had not known for a long period; and that education, morality, and religion had received a great advancement in Scotland in consequence of that change. Therefore, after all, it is not the most dreadful thing in the world—not so bad as a great earthquake—or as many other things that have happened. I am not quite sure that the Scottish people themselves may not some day ask you—if you do not yourselves introduce and pass it without their asking—to allow their State Church to be disestablished.

I met only the other day a most intelligent gentleman from the north of Scotland, and he told me that the minister of the church he frequented had 250*l.* a-year from the Establishment Funds, which he thought very much too little, and he felt certain that, if the Establishment were abolished, and the Church made into a Free Church, the salary of the minister would be immediately advanced to at least 500*l.* a-year. That is a very good argument for the ministers, and we shall see by-and-by, if the conversion of Scotland proceeds much further, that you may be asked to disestablish their Church. The hon. Member for Honiton last night quoted something which, I daresay, he did not recollect accurately—something which I had said respecting the Church of England; but the fact is that the Church of England is not suffering from the assaults

of the Liberation Society; it is suffering from a very different complaint. It is an internal complaint. You have had it before one of the courts of law within the last few days, and a very curious decision has been given,—that candles are lawful, but incense is something terrible, and cannot be allowed; and then the newspapers tell you that on the very next Sunday there is more incense in that particular church which has been complained of than there ever had been before.

I will tell hon. Gentlemen opposite what it is that endangers the State Church now—I mean a State Church like this in England, against which there is no violent political assault. It is the prevalence of zeal. Whenever zeal creeps into a State Church, it takes naturally different forms—one strongly Evangelical, another strongly High Church or Ritualist—and these two species of zeal work on and on in opposition, until finally there comes a catastrophe, and it is found that it is not Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society, although they have prepared men's minds not to dread it, but it is something wholly different, within the Church itself, that causes the disruption of the Church. The Scottish disruption did not take place from any assaults from without—it took place from zeal and difficulties within; and if you could keep the whole of the Church of England perfectly harmonious within its own borders, it would take a very daring prophet who would undertake to point out the time when it would be disestablished.

We will confine ourselves, therefore, to Ireland, and I will ask hon. Gentlemen this: I believe Gentlemen opposite do not usually reject the view which we entertain, that the abolition of the State Church in Ireland would tend to lessen the difficulties of governing that country. I think there is scarcely an hon. Gentleman on the other side, who has not some doubt of his previous opinions, some slight misgiving on this point, and some disposition to accept our view of the case. Well, why should you be afraid? Even children, we

know, can be induced, by repeated practice, to go into a dark room without fear. You have always, somebody said the other night, lions in the path; but I will not dignify them with the name of lions—they are but hobgoblins. Now, when you have seen and handled them, as you have a great many times since I have been in the habit of speaking face to face with you, these things are found, after all, to be only hobgoblins; you have learned, after all, that they are perfectly harmless; and when you thought we were doing you harm, and upsetting the Constitution, you have found that, after all, we were doing you good, and that the Constitution was rather stronger than it was before. Let me point out for a moment some of these changes that were found at the time to be of great difficulty, but have been found to be very wise and good afterwards.

When I came into this House, nearly twenty-five years ago, our colonial system was wholly different from what it is now. It has been changed: Sir William Molesworth and Joseph Hume were mainly the authors in Parliament of that change. Well, all our colonies, as we all admit, are much more easily governed and much more loyal than they were in those days. Turning then to our financial system—and I really do not want to offend any one by mentioning this—you know that our financial system, since Sir Robert Peel came into office in 1841, has been completely changed, and yet the revenue of the country is larger, which I regard as a misfortune—and not only larger, but more secure by far, if Parliament requires it, than it was at any previous period of our history. Take the old protective system, which the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) and some others have not forgotten. Free-trade was a frightful monster. But the protective system is gone; and now every candid man amongst you will admit that industry, being more free throughout the country, is better rewarded, and that the land, which you said would go out of cultivation, and become

of no value, sells for a higher price in the market than it ever brought before.

There are two other points on which I wish to add a word. One was mentioned last night after many Members had gone home. The balance of power was once considered the beginning and end of our foreign policy, and I am not sure that there are not some old statesmen in the other House who believe in it even yet. What was done last night? The noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire, who comes up from Scotland brimfull of enthusiasm for impossible projects, proposed to put in words which had been rejected from the preamble of the Mutiny Bill relating to the preservation of the balance of power. What did one of your most distinguished Ministers, the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for War, say in reference to the proposition? He said he thought it singular that the hon. Member for Chatham should have proposed to omit the words, because they really meant nothing, but he was still more surprised that the noble Lord should have asked to have them replaced. Well, thus you see that this balance of power is gone, and yet England, I will undertake to say, under the rational and fair administration of foreign affairs by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, is just as much respected by all foreign Powers as she was when we were ready to meddle in every stupid quarrel that occurred upon the Continent of Europe.

Now, there is only one other thing to which I will advert —the question of the representation. You know, in 1830, there was almost no representation. There were a few towns in which there was almost universal suffrage, and many scores of rotten boroughs; in fact, the whole system was in such a state of congestion that it could not be tolerated any longer, and we had a small, but which might have been a very large revolution, in amending that state of things. Last year you, who had seen this hobgoblin for years, who

had thought, I have no doubt, many of you, that I was very unwise and very rash in the mode in which I had proposed to extend the suffrage; last year you found out that it was not so monstrous a thing after all, and you became almost enthusiastic in support of the right hon. Gentleman's Reform Bill. Well, you believe now, and the First Minister, if this was an occasion on which he had to speak about it, would tell you not to be afraid of what was done,—he would tell you that, based on the suffrage of a larger portion of your countrymen, Parliament will henceforth be more strong and more venerated by the people than ever it has been before.

If that is true of Parliament, what shall we say of the Throne itself after all these changes? I will venture to ask, whatever of convenience there may be in hereditary monarchy, whatever of historic grandeur in the kingly office, whatever of nobleness in the possessor of the Crown, in all these things is it not true that everything is at least as fully recognised by the nation as it ever was at any previous period? I do not mention these things to reproach anybody here. We all have to learn. There are many in this House who have been in process of learning for a good while. I am not sure that my right hon. Friend the Member for South Lancashire would not admit to us that on this very question of the Irish Church his opinions have been greatly expanded, and have been ripening for a series of years. That is greatly to the credit, not only of his head, but of his heart. We have seen even amongst you a progress in many things—a progress which is most gratifying to me—that is a very small matter; but it is a very wholesome indication that the minds of men are becoming more open to the consideration of great principles in connection with great public questions. And this gives us promise that in future we shall have—as, no doubt, we shall have—a Government more in accordance with public opinion and public interests than we have had in past times

In my opinion, the changes that have been made in our time are the glory of our time, and I believe that our posterity will regard them as the natural and blessed fruits of the growth of intelligence in our day. I mention these things to urge you not to close your ears to the arguments nor to close your hearts to the impressions of justice which must assail you with regard to this question which is now being debated so much in Great Britain and Ireland. I might appeal to a right hon. Gentleman who perhaps is in the House—the Member for the County of Limerick—who was at a very remarkable meeting held the other day in Limerick on this very question. I have heard from sources which cannot, I think, be questioned, that it was one of the most remarkable meetings held in Ireland within the last twenty years, or, perhaps, I might say for a longer period. There was a far more healthy tone of mind, of conduct, of feeling, of expression, of everything we wish for, but have not known there for a very long period; and I believe and know—because I am told by witnesses who cannot be contradicted—that the change arose from the growing belief that there was a sufficient majority in this House, that the general opinion of Parliament was sufficiently strong, to enable this measure of justice and reconciliation to be passed. Now, I ask you, if, after what has taken place, you are able, unhappily able, to prevent the progress of the movement which is now on foot for the disestablishment of the State Church in Ireland, are you not of opinion that it will create great dissatisfaction; that it will add to the existing discontent; that it will make those that are hopeful despair; and that men—rash men, if you like—strong and earnest men, will speak to those that hitherto have not been rash, and have not been earnest, and will say, 'You see at last; is this not a proof convincing and unanswerable, that the Imperial Parliament sitting in London is not capable of hearing our

complaints, and of doing that justice which we as a people require at its hands?'

Do not imagine that I am speaking with personal hostility to the right hon. Gentleman who is your Chief Minister here. Do not imagine for a moment that I am one of those, if there be any, who are hoping to drive hon. Gentlemen from that bench in order that I may take one of the places occupied by them. I would treat this subject as a thing far beyond and far above party differences. The question comes before the House, of course, as all these great questions must, as a great party question, and I am one of the Members of this party; but it does not follow that all the Members of a party should be actuated by a party spirit, or by a miserable, low ambition to take the place of a Minister of the Crown. I say there is something far higher and better than that; and if ever there was a question presented to Parliament which invited the exercise of the highest and noblest feelings of Members of the House, I say this is that question.

I say, then, do not be alarmed at what is proposed. Let us take this Irish State Church; let us take it, not with a rude—I am against rudeness and harshness in legislative action—but if not with a rude, still with a resolute grasp. If you adopt the policy we recommend, you will pluck up a weed which pollutes the air. ['Oh! Oh!'] I will give hon. Gentlemen consolation in the conclusion of the sentence—I say you will pluck up a weed which pollutes the air; but you will leave a free Protestant Church, which will be hereafter an ornament and a grace to all those who may be brought within the range of its influence. Sir, I said in the beginning of my observations that there are the people of three kingdoms who are waiting with anxious suspense for the solution of this question. Ireland waits and longs. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Limerick; I appeal to that Meeting, the character of which he can describe, and

perhaps may describe, to the House; and I say that Ireland waits and longs for a great act of reconciliation. I say, further, that England and Scotland are eager to make atonement for past crimes and past errors; and I say, yet further, that it depends upon us, this House of Commons, this Imperial Parliament, whether that reconciliation shall take place, and whether that atonement shall at length be made.

# WAR

WITH

# RUSSIA.

# RUSSIA.

## I.

### WAR WITH RUSSIA—THE QUEEN'S MESSAGE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 31, 1854.

*From Hansard.*

[Mr. Bright was opposed to the war with Russia. This speech was spoken on the day when the message from the Crown announcing the declaration of war was brought down to the House.]

THERE are two reasons which may induce a Member of this House to address it—he may hope to convince some of those to whom he speaks, or he may wish to clear himself from any participation in a course which he believes to be evil. I presume I am one of that small section of the House to whom the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Layard) has referred, when he alluded to the small party who objected to the policy by which this country has arrived at the 'triumphant position which it now occupies.' In coming forward to speak on this occasion, I may be told that I am like a physician proposing to prescribe to-day for a man who died yesterday, and that it is of no use to insist upon views which the Government and the House have already determined to reject. I feel, however, that we are entering upon a policy which may affect the fortunes of this country for a long time to

come, and I am unwilling to lose this opportunity of explaining wherein I differ from the course which the Government has pursued, and of clearing myself from any portion of the responsibility which attaches to those who support the policy which the Government has adopted.

We are asked to give our confidence to the Administration in voting the Address to the Crown, which has been moved by the noble Lord the Member for London, and to pledge our support to them in the war in which the country is now to engage. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), on a recent occasion, made use of a term which differed considerably from what he said in a former debate; he spoke of this war as a 'just and unnecessary war.' I shall not discuss the justice of the war. It may be difficult to decide a point like this, seeing that every war undertaken since the days of Nimrod has been declared to be just by those in favour of it; but I may at least question whether any war that is unnecessary can be deemed to be just. I shall not discuss this question on the abstract principle of peace at any price, as it is termed, which is held by a small minority of persons in this country, founded on religious opinions which are not generally received, but I shall discuss it entirely on principles which are accepted by all the Members of this House. I shall maintain that when we are deliberating on the question of war, and endeavouring to prove its justice or necessity, it becomes us to show that the interests of the country are clearly involved; that the objects for which the war is undertaken are probable, or, at least, possible of attainment; and, further, that the end proposed to be accomplished is worth the cost and the sacrifices which we are about to incur. I think these are fair principles on which to discuss the question, and I hope that when the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston) rises during this debate, he will not assume that I have dealt with it on any other principles than these.

The House should bear in mind that at this moment we are in intimate alliance with a neighbouring Government, which was, at a recent period, the originator of the troubles which have arisen at Constantinople. I do not wish to blame the French Government, because nothing could have been more proper than the manner in which it has retired from the difficulty it had created; but it is nevertheless quite true that France, having made certain demands upon Turkey with regard to concessions to the Latin Church, backed by a threat of the appearance of a French fleet in the Dardanelles, which demands Turkey had wholly or partially complied with; Russia, the powerful neighbour of Turkey, being on the watch, made certain other demands, having reference to the Greek Church; and Russia at the same time required (and this I understand to be the real ground of the quarrel) that Turkey should define by treaty, or convention, or by a simple note, or memorandum, what was conceded, and what were the rights of Russia, in order that the Government of Russia might not suffer in future from the varying policy and the vacillation of the Ottoman Government.

Now, it seems to me quite impossible to discuss this question without considering the actual condition of Turkey. The hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) assumes that they who do not agree in the policy he advocates are necessarily hostile to the Turks, and have no sympathy for Turkey. I repudiate such an assumption altogether. I can feel for a country like that, if it be insulted or oppressed by a powerful neighbour; but all that sympathy may exist without my being able to convince myself that it is the duty of this country to enter into the serious obligation of a war in defence of the rights of that country. The noble Lord the Member for Tiverton is one of the very few men in this House, or out of it, who are bold enough to insist upon it that there is a growing strength in the Turkish Empire. There was a Gentleman in this House, sixty years ago, who,

in the debates in 1791, expressed the singular opinion which the noble Lord now holds. There was a Mr. Stanley in the House at that period, who insisted on the growing power of Turkey, and asserted that the Turks of that day 'were more and more imitating our manners, and emerging from their inactivity and indolence; that improvements of every kind were being introduced among them, and that even printing-presses had been lately established in their capital.' That was the opinion of a Gentleman anxious to defend Turkey, and speaking in this House more than sixty years ago; we are now living sixty years later, and no one now, but the noble Lord, seems to insist upon the fact of the great and growing power of the Turkish Empire.

If any one thing is more apparent than another, on the face of all the documents furnished to the House by the Government of which the noble Lord is a Member, it is this, that the Turkish Empire is falling, or has fallen, into a state of decay, and into anarchy so permanent as to have assumed a chronic character. The noble Lord surely has not forgotten that Turkey has lost the Crimea and Bessarabia, and its control over the Danubian Principalities; that the Kingdom of Greece has been carved out of it; that it has lost its authority over Algiers, and has run great risk of being conquered by its own vassal the Pasha of Egypt; and from this he might have drawn the conclusion that the empire was gradually falling into decay, and that to pledge ourselves to effect its recovery and sustentation, is to undertake what no human power will be able to accomplish. I only ask the House to turn to the statements which will be found nearly at the end of the first of the Blue Books recently placed on the table of the House, and they will find that there is scarcely any calamity which can be described as afflicting any country, which is not there proved to be present, and actively at work, in almost every province of the Turkish Empire. And the House should bear in mind,

when reading these despatches from the English Consuls in Turkey to the English Ambassador at Constantinople, that they give a very faint picture of what really exists, because what are submitted to us are but extracts of more extended and important communications. It may fairly be assumed that the parts which are not published are those which described the state of things to be so bad, that the Government has been unwilling to lay before the House, and the country, and the world, that which would be so offensive and so injurious to its ally the Sultan of Turkey.

But, if other evidence be wanting, is it not a fact that Constantinople is the seat of intrigues and factions to a degree not known in any other country or capital in the world? France demands one thing, Russia another, England a third, and Austria something else. For many years past our Ambassador at Constantinople has been partly carrying on the government of that country, and influencing its policy, and it is the city in which are fought the diplomatic contests of the Great Powers of Europe. And if I have accurately described the state of Turkey, what is the position of Russia? It is a powerful country, under a strong Executive Government; it is adjacent to a weak and falling nation; it has in its history the evidences of a succession of triumphs over Turkey; it has religious affinities with a majority of the population of European Turkey which make it absolutely impossible that its Government should not, more or less, interfere, or have a strong interest, in the internal policy of the Ottoman Empire. Now, if we were Russian—and I put the case to the Members of this House—is it not likely, according to all the theories I have heard explained when we have been concerned in similar cases, that a large majority of the House and the country would be strongly in favour of such intervention as Russia has attempted? and if I opposed it, as I certainly should oppose it, I should be in a minority on that question more insignificant than that in

which I have now the misfortune to find myself with regard to the policy of the Government on the grave question now before us.

The noble Lord the Member for London has made a statement of the case of the Government, and in favour of this Address to the Crown; but I thought it was a statement remarkably feeble in fact and in argument, if intended as a justification of the course he and his Colleagues have taken. For the purposes of the noble Lord's defence, the Russian demand upon Turkey is assumed to be something of far greater importance than I have been able to discover it to be from a careful examination of the terms in which it was couched. The noble Lord himself, in one of his despatches, admits that Russia had reason to complain, and that she has certain rights and duties by treaty, and by tradition, with regard to the protection of the Christians in Turkey. Russia asserted these rights, and wished to have them defined in a particular form; and it was on the question of the form of the demand, and the manner in which it should be conceded, that the whole of this unfortunate difference has arisen. Now, if Russia made certain demands on Turkey, this country insisted that Turkey should not consent to them; for although the noble Lord has attempted to show that Turkey herself, acting for herself, had resolved to resist, I defy any one to read the despatches of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe without coming to the conclusion that, from the beginning to the end of the negotiations, the English Ambassador had insisted, in the strongest manner, that Turkey should refuse to make the slightest concession on the real point at issue in the demands of the Russian Government. As a proof of that statement, I may refer to the account given by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, in his despatch of the 5th of May, 1853, of the private interview he had with the Sultan, the Minister of the Sultan having left him at the door, that the interview might be strictly private. In describing that interview, Lord Stratford

says, 'I then endeavoured to give him a just idea of the degree of danger to which his Empire was exposed.' The Sultan was not sufficiently aware of his danger, and the English Ambassador 'endeavoured to give him a just idea of it;' and it was by means such as this that he urged upon the Turkish Government the necessity of resistance to any of the demands of Russia, promising the armed assistance of England, whatever consequences might ensue. From the moment that promise was made, or from the moment it was sanctioned by the Cabinet at home, war was all but inevitable; they had entered into a partnership with the Turkish Government (which, indeed, could scarcely be called a Government at all), to assist it by military force; and Turkey, having old quarrels to settle with Russia, and old wrongs to avenge, was not slow to plunge into the war, having secured the co-operation of two powerful nations, England and France, in her quarrel.

Now, I have no special sympathy with Russia, and I refuse to discuss or to decide this question on grounds of sympathy with Russia or with Turkey; I consider it simply as it affects the duties and the interests of my own country. I find that after the first proposition for a treaty had been made by Prince Menchikoff, that envoy made some concession, and asked only for a *Sened*, or Convention; and when that was disapproved of, he offered to accept a note, or memorandum merely, that should specify what should be agreed upon. But the Turk was advised to resist, first the treaty, then the convention, and then the note or memorandum; and an armed force was promised on behalf of this country. At the same time he knew that he would incur the high displeasure of England and France, and especially of England, if he made the slightest concession to Russia. It was about the middle of May that Prince Menchikoff left Constantinople, not having succeeded in obtaining any concession from the Porte; and it was on the 3rd of July that the Russian forces crossed

the Pruth; thinking, I believe, by making a dash at the Principalities, to coerce Turkey, and deter her allies from rendering her the promised support. It has been assumed by some, that if England had declared war last year, Russia would have been deterred from any further step, and that the whole matter would have been settled at once. I, however, have no belief that Russia on the one hand, or England and France on the other, would have been bullied into any change of policy by means of that kind.

I come now to the celebrated 'Vienna note.' I am bound here to say, that nobody has yet been able clearly to explain the difference between the various notes Turkey has been advised to reject, and this and other notes she has been urged to accept. With respect to this particular note, nobody seems to have understood it. There were four Ambassadors at Vienna, representing England, France, Austria, and Prussia; and these four gentlemen drew up the Vienna note, and recommended it to the Porte as one which she might accept without injury to her independence or her honour. Louis Napoleon is a man knowing the use of language, and able to comprehend the meaning of a document of this nature, and his Minister of Foreign Affairs is a man of eminent ability; and Louis Napoleon and his Minister agree with the Ambassadors at Vienna as to the character of the Vienna note. We have a Cabinet composed of men of great individual capacity; a Cabinet, too, including no less than five Gentlemen who have filled the office of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and who may, therefore, be presumed to understand even the sometimes concealed meaning of diplomatic phraseology. These five Foreign Secretaries, backed by the whole Cabinet, concurred with the Ambassadors at Vienna, and with the Emperor of the French and his Foreign Secretary, in recommending the Vienna note to the Sultan as a document which he might accept consistently with his honour, and with that integrity and that independence which

our Government is so anxious to secure for him. What was done with this note? Passing by the marvellous stupidity, or something worse, which caused that note not to be submitted to Turkey before it was sent to St. Petersburg, he would merely state that it was sent to St. Petersburg, and was accepted in its integrity by the Emperor of Russia in the most frank and unreserved manner. We were then told — I was told by Members of the Government—that the moment the note was accepted by Russia we might consider the affair to be settled, and that the dispute would never be heard of again. When, however, the note was sent to Constantinople, after its acceptance by Russia, Turkey discovered, or thought, or said she discovered, that it was as bad as the original or modified proposition of Prince Menchikoff, and she refused the note as it was, and proposed certain modifications. And what are we to think of these arbitrators or mediators—the four Ambassadors at Vienna, and the Governments of France and England—who, after discussing the matter in three different cities, and at three distinct and different periods, and after agreeing that the proposition was one which Turkey could assent to without detriment to her honour and independence, immediately afterwards turned round, and declared that the note was one which Turkey could not be asked to accede to, and repudiated in the most formal and express manner that which they themselves had drawn up, and which, only a few days before, they had approved of as a combination of wisdom and diplomatic dexterity which had never been excelled?

But it was said that the interpretation which Count Nesselrode placed upon this note made it impossible for Turkey to accede to it. I very much doubt whether Count Nesselrode placed any meaning upon it which it did not fairly warrant, and it is impossible to say whether he really differed at all from the actual intentions of the four Ambassadors at Vienna. But I can easily understand the course taken by

the Russian Minister. It was this:—seeing the note was rejected by the Turk, and considering that its previous acceptance by Russia was some concession from the original demand, he issued a circular, giving such an explanation or interpretation of the Vienna note as might enable him to get back to his original position, and might save Russia from being committed and damaged by the concession, which, for the sake of peace, she had made. This circular, however, could make no real difference in the note itself; and notwithstanding this circular, whatever the note really meant, it would have been just as binding upon Russia as any other note will be that may be drawn up and agreed to at the end of the war. Although, however, this note was considered inadmissible, negotiations were continued; and at the Conference at Olmutz, at which the Earl of Westmoreland was present, the Emperor of Russia himself expressed his willingness to accept the Vienna note—not in the sense that Count Nesselrode had placed upon it, but in that which the Ambassadors at Vienna declared to be its real meaning, and with such a clause as they should attach to it, defining its real meaning.

It is impossible from this fairly to doubt the sincerity of the desire for peace manifested by the Emperor of Russia. He would accept the note prepared by the Conference at Vienna, sanctioned by the Cabinets in London and Paris, and according to the interpretation put upon it by those by whom it had been prepared—such interpretation to be defined in a clause, to be by them attached to the original note. But in the precise week in which these negotiations were proceeding apparently to a favourable conclusion, the Turkish Council, consisting of a large number of dignitaries of the Turkish Empire—not one of whom, however, represented the Christian majority of the population of Turkey, but inspired by the fanaticism and desperation of the old Mahomedan party—assembled; and, fearful that peace would be esta-

blished, and that they would lose the great opportunity of dragging England and France into a war with their ancient enemy the Emperor of Russia, they came to a sudden resolution in favour of war; and in the very week in which Russia agreed to the Vienna note in the sense of the Vienna Conference, the Turks declared war against Russia,—the Turkish forces crossed the Danube, and began the war, involving England in an inglorious and costly struggle, from which this Government and a succeeding Government may fail to extricate us.

I differ very much from those Gentlemen who condemn the Government for the tardy nature of their proceedings. I never said or thought that the Government was not honestly anxious for peace; but I believe, and indeed I know, that at an early period they committed themselves and the country to a policy which left the issue of peace or war in other hands than their own—namely, in the hands of the Turks, the very last hands in which I am willing to trust the interests and the future of this country. In my opinion, the original blunder was committed when the Turks were advised to resist and not to concede; and the second blunder was made when the Turks were supported in their rejection of the Vienna note; for the moment the four Powers admitted that their recommendation was not necessarily to be accepted by the Porte, they put themselves entirely into the hands of the Turk, and might be dragged into any depth of confusion and war in which that respectable individual might wish to involve them.

The course taken by Turkey in beginning the war was against the strong advice of her allies; but, notwithstanding this, the moment the step was taken, they turned round again, as in the case of the Vienna note, and justified and defended her in the course she had adopted, in defiance of the remonstrances they had urged against it. In his speech to-night, the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) has occupied some

time in showing that Turkey was fully justified in declaring war. I should say nothing against that view, if Turkey were fighting on her own resources; but I maintain that, if she is in alliance with England and France, the opinions of those Powers should at least have been heard, and that, in case of her refusal to listen to their counsel, they would have been justified in saying to her, 'If you persist in taking your own course, we cannot be involved in the difficulties to which it may give rise, but must leave you to take the consequences of your own acts.' But this was not said, and the result is, that we are dragged into a war by the madness of the Turk, which, but for the fatal blunders we have committed, we might have avoided.

There have been three plans for dealing with this Turkish question, advocated by as many parties in this country. The first finds favour with two or three Gentlemen who usually sit on the bench below me—with a considerable number out of doors—and with a portion of the public press. These persons were anxious to have gone to war during last summer. They seem actuated by a frantic and bitter hostility to Russia, and, without considering the calamities in which they might involve this country, they have sought to urge it into a great war, as they imagined, on behalf of European freedom, and in order to cripple the resources of Russia. I need hardly say that I have not a particle of sympathy with that party, or with that policy. I think nothing can be more unwise than that party, and nothing more atrocious than their policy. But there was another course recommended, and which the Government has followed. War delayed, but still certain—arrangements made which placed the issue of war in other hands than in those of the Government of this country—that is the policy which the Government has pursued, and in my opinion it is fatal to Turkey, and disastrous to England. There is a third course, and which I should have, and indeed have all along recommended

—that war should have been avoided by the acceptance on the part of Turkey either of the last note of Prince Menchikoff, or of the Vienna note; or, if Turkey would not consent to either, that then she should have been allowed to enter into the war alone, and England and France—supposing they had taken, and continued to take, the same view of the interests of Western Europe which they have hitherto taken—might have stood aloof until the time when there appeared some evident danger of the war being settled on terms destructive of the balance of power; and then they might have come in, and have insisted on a different settlement. I would either have allowed or compelled Turkey to yield, or would have insisted on her carrying on the war alone.

The question is, whether the advantages both to Turkey and England of avoiding war altogether, would have been less than those which are likely to arise from the policy which the Government has pursued? Now, if the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton is right in saying that Turkey is a growing Power, and that she has elements of strength which unlearned persons like myself know nothing about; surely no immediate, or sensible, or permanent mischief could have arisen to her from the acceptance of the Vienna note, which all the distinguished persons who agreed to it have declared to be perfectly consistent with her honour and independence. If she has been growing stronger and stronger of late years, surely she would have grown still stronger in the future, and there might have been a reasonable expectation that, whatever disadvantages she might have suffered for a time from that note, her growing strength would have enabled her to overcome them, while the peace of Europe might have been preserved. But suppose that Turkey is not a growing Power, but that the Ottoman rule in Europe is tottering to its fall, I come to the conclusion that, whatever advantages were afforded to the Christian population of Turkey would have enabled them to grow more rapidly in numbers, in industry, in wealth, in

intelligence, and in political power; and that, as they thus increased in influence, they would have become more able, in case any accident, which might not be far distant, occurred, to supplant the Mahomedan rule, and to establish themselves in Constantinople as a Christian State, which, I think, every man who hears me will admit is infinitely more to be desired than that the Mahomedan power should be permanently sustained by the bayonets of France and the fleets of England. Europe would thus have been at peace; for I do not think even the most bitter enemies of Russia believe that the Emperor of Russia intended last year, if the Vienna note or Prince Menchikoff's last and most moderate proposition had been accepted, to have marched on Constantinople. Indeed, he had pledged himself in the most distinct manner to withdraw his troops at once from the Principalities, if the Vienna note were accepted; and therefore in that case Turkey would have been delivered from the presence of the foe; peace would for a time have been secured to Europe; and the whole matter would have drifted on to its natural solution—which is, that the Mahomedan power in Europe should eventually succumb to the growing power of the Christian population of the Turkish territories.

The noble Lord the Member for London, and his colleague the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton, when they speak of the aggrandisement of Russia relatively to the rest of Europe, always speak of the 'balance of power,' a term which it is not easy to define. It is a hackneyed term—a phrase to which it is difficult to attach any definite meaning. I wish the noble Lord would explain what is meant by the balance of power. In 1791, the whole Whig party repudiated the proposition that Turkey had anything to do with the balance of power. Mr. Burke, in 1791, when speaking on that subject, used the following language:—

'He had never heard it said before, that the Turkish Empire was ever considered as any part of the balance of power in Europe. They had nothing to

do with European policy; they considered themselves as wholly Asiatic. What had these worse than savages to do with the Powers of Europe, but to spread war, destruction, and pestilence among them? The Ministry and the policy which would give these people any weight in Europe, would deserve all the bans and curses of posterity. All that was holy in religion, all that was moral and humane, demanded an abhorrence of everything which tended to extend the power of that cruel and wasteful Empire. Any Christian Power was to be preferred to these destructive savages.'

Mr. Whitbread, on the same occasion, said :—

'Suppose the Empress at Constantinople, and the Turks expelled from the European provinces, would any unprejudiced man contend that by such an event mankind would not be largely benefited? Would any man contend that the expulsion of a race of beings whose abominable tyranny proscribed the arts, and literature, and everything that was good, and great, and amiable, would not conduce to the prosperity and happiness of the world? He was convinced it would. This was an event with which the paltry consideration of the nice adjustment of the balance in Europe was not to be put in competition, although he was a friend to that balance on broad and liberal principles. He abhorred the wretched policy which could entertain a wish that the most luxuriant part of the earth should remain desolate and miserable that a particular system might be maintained.'

And Mr. Fox, when speaking of Mr. Pitt's system, said—and be it remembered that nobody is so great an authority with the noble Lord the Member for London as Mr. Fox, whose words I am now about to quote :—

'His (Mr. Pitt's) defensive system was wicked and absurd—that every country which appeared, from whatever cause, to be growing great, should be attacked; that all the Powers of Europe should be confined to the same precise situation in which this defensive system found them. . . . Her (Russia's) extent of territory, scanty revenue, and thin population made her power by no means formidable to us—a Power whom we could neither attack nor be attacked by: and this was the Power against which we were going to war. Overturning the Ottoman Empire he conceived to be an argument of no weight. The event was not probable, and if it should happen, it was more likely to be of advantage than injurious to us.'

It will probably be said, that these were opinions held by Gentlemen who sat on that side of the House, and who were ready to advocate any course that might serve to damage the Ministers of the day. I should be sorry to think so, especially of a man whose public character is so much to be admired as that of Mr. Fox; but I will come to a much later period, and produce authority of a very similar kind.

Many hon. Members now in the House recollect the late Lord Holland, and they all know his sagacity and what his authority was with the party with which he was connected. What did he say? Why, so late as the year 1828, when this question was mooted in the House of Lords, he said: —

'No, my Lords, I hope I shall never see—God forbid I ever should see—for the proposition would be scouted from one end of England to another—any preparations or any attempt to defend this our "ancient ally" from the attacks of its enemies. There was no arrangement made in that treaty for preserving the crumbling and hateful, or, as Mr. Burke called it, that wasteful and disgusting Empire of the Turks, from dismemberment and destruction; and none of the Powers who were parties to that treaty will ever, I hope, save the falling Empire of Turkey from ruin.'

I hope it will not be supposed that I am animated by any hostility to Turkey, in quoting sentiments and language such as this, for I have as much sympathy with what is just towards that country as any other man can have; but the question is, not what is just to Turkey, but what is just to this country, and what this House, as the depositary of the power of this country, has a right to do with regard to this most dangerous question. I am, therefore, at liberty to quote from the statesmen of 1791 and 1828, the political fathers and authorities of the noble Lord the Member for London, and to say, that if I hold opinions different from those held by the Government, I am, at least, not singular in those opinions, for I can quote great names and high authorities in support of the course I am taking.

This 'balance of power' is in reality the hinge on which the whole question turns. But if that is so important as to be worth a sanguinary war, why did you not go to war with France when she seized upon Algiers? That was a portion of Turkey not quite so distinct, it is true, as are the Danubian Principalities; but still Turkey had sovereign rights over Algiers. When, therefore, France seized on a large portion of the northern coast of Africa, might it not have been said that such an act tended to convert the Mediterranean into a

French lake,—that Algiers lay next to Tunis, and that, having conquered Tunis, there would remain only Tripoli between France and Alexandria, and that the 'balance of power' was being destroyed by the aggrandisement of France? All this might have been said, and the Government might easily have plunged the country into war on that question. But happily the Government of that day had the good sense not to resist, and the result had not been disadvantageous to Europe; this country had not suffered from the seizure of Algiers, and England and France had continued at peace.

Take another case—the case of the United States. The United States waged war with Mexico—a war with a weaker State—in my opinion, an unjust and unnecessary war. If I had been a citizen of the American Republic, I should have condemned that war; but might it not have been as justly argued that, if we allowed the aggressive attacks of the United States upon Mexico, her insatiable appetite would soon be turned towards the north—towards the dependencies of this Empire—and that the magnificent colonies of the Canadas would soon fall a prey to the assaults of their rapacious neighbour? But such arguments were not used, and it was not thought necessary to involve this country in a war for the support of Mexico, although the Power that was attacking that country lay adjacent to our own dominions.

If this phrase of the 'balance of power' is to be always an argument for war, the pretence for war will never be wanting, and peace can never be secure. Let any one compare the power of this country with that of Austria now, and forty years ago. Will any one say that England, compared with Austria, is now three times as powerful as she was thirty or forty years ago? Austria has a divided people, bankrupt finances, and her credit is so low that she cannot borrow a shilling out of her own territories; England has a united people, national wealth rapidly increasing, and a mechanical and productive power to which that of Austria is as nothing.

Might not Austria complain that we have disturbed the 'balance of power' because we are growing so much stronger from better government, from the greater union of our people, from the wealth that is created by the hard labour and skill of our population, and from the wonderful development of the mechanical resources of the kingdom, which is seen on every side? If this phrase of the 'balance of power,' the meaning of which nobody can exactly make out, is to be brought in on every occasion to stimulate this country to war, there is an end to all hope of permanent peace.

There is, indeed, a question of a 'balance of power' which this country might regard, if our statesmen had a little less of those narrow views which they sometimes arrogantly impute to me and to those who think with me. If they could get beyond those old notions which belong to the traditions of Europe, and cast their eyes as far westward as they are now looking eastward, they might there see a power growing up in its gigantic proportions, which will teach us before very long where the true 'balance of power' is to be found. This struggle may indeed begin with Russia, but it may end with half the States of Europe; for Austria and Prussia are just as likely to join with Russia as with England and France, and probably much more so; and we know not how long alliances which now appear very secure, may remain so; for the circumstances in which the Government has involved us are of the most critical character, and we stand upon a mine which may explode any day. Give us seven years of this infatuated struggle upon which we are now entering, and let the United States remain at peace during that period, and who shall say what will then be the relative positions of the two nations? Have you read the Reports of your own Commissioners to the New York Exhibition? Do you comprehend what is the progress of that country, as exhibited in its tonnage, and exports, and imports, and manufactures, and in the development of all

its resources, and the means of transit? There has been nothing like it hitherto under the sun. The United States may profit to a large extent by the calamities which will befall us; whilst we, under the miserable and lunatic idea that we are about to set the worn-out Turkish Empire on its legs, and permanently to sustain it against the aggressions of Russia, are entangled in a war. Our trade will decay and diminish—our people, suffering and discontented, as in all former periods of war, will emigrate in increasing numbers to a country whose wise policy is to keep itself free from the entanglement of European politics—to a country with which rests the great question, whether England shall, for any long time, retain that which she professes to value so highly—her great superiority in industry and at sea.

This whole notion of the 'balance of power' is a mischievous delusion which has come down to us from past times; we ought to drive it from our minds, and to consider the solemn question of peace or war on more clear, more definite, and on far higher principles than any that are involved in the phrase the 'balance of power.' What is it the Government propose to do? Let us examine their policy as described in the message from the Crown, and in the Address which has been moved to-night. As I understand it, we are asked to go to war to maintain the 'integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire'—to curb the aggressive power of Russia—and to defend the interests of this country.

These are the three great objects to which the efforts and resources of this country are to be directed. The noble Lord the Member for London is, I think, the author of the phrase 'the integrity and independence' of Turkey. If I am not mistaken, he pledged himself to this more than a year ago, when he was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a letter to somebody at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in answer to an Address from certain enthusiasts in that town, who exhorted the Government to step in for the support of the Ottoman

Empire. But what is the condition of that Empire at this moment? I have already described to the House what it would have been if my policy had been adopted—if the thrice-modified note of Prince Menchikoff had been accepted, or if the Vienna note had been assented to by the Porte. But what is it now under the protection of the noble Lord and his Colleagues? At the present moment there are no less than three foreign armies on Turkish soil: there are 100,000 Russian troops in Bulgaria; there are armies from England and France approaching the Dardanelles, to entrench themselves on Turkish territory, and to return nobody knows when. All this can hardly contribute to the 'independence' of any country. But more than this: there are insurrections springing up in almost every Turkish province, and insurrections which must, from the nature of the Turkish Government, widely extend; and it is impossible to describe the anarchy which must prevail, inasmuch as the control heretofore exercised by the Government to keep the peace is now gone, by the withdrawal of its troops to the banks of the Danube; and the licence and demoralization engendered by ages of bad government will be altogether unchecked. In addition to these complicated horrors, there are 200,000 men under arms; the state of their finances is already past recovery; and the allies of Turkey are making demands upon her far beyond anything that was required by Russia herself. Can anything be more destructive of the 'integrity and independence' of Turkey than the policy of the noble Lord?

I have seen only this day a letter in the *Times* from its Correspondent at Constantinople, which states that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and one of the Pashas of the Porte had spent a whole night in the attempt to arrange concessions which her allies had required on behalf of the Christian population of Turkey. The Christians are to be allowed to hold landed property; the capitation tax is to be abolished—for they are actually contending for the abolition of that which

the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) says is a positive benefit to those upon whom it is imposed; and the evidence of Christians is to be admitted into courts of justice. But the *Times'* Correspondent asks, what is the use of a decree at Constantinople, which will have no effect in the provinces? —for the judges are Turks of the old school, and they will have little sympathy with a change under which a Christian in a court of justice is made equal with his master the Turk. This Correspondent describes what Turkey really wants—not three foreign armies on her soil, nor any other thing which our Government is about to give her, but 'a pure executive, a better financial administration, and sensible laws;' and it must be admitted that the true wants of the country are not likely soon to be supplied.

Now, so far as regards Turkey herself, and the 'integrity and independence' of that Empire, I put it seriously to the House—do you believe, that if the Government and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had advised Turkey to accept the last note of Prince Menchikoff, a note so little different from the others, offered before and since, that it was impossible to discover in what the distinction consisted; or if the Government had insisted on Turkey accepting, as the condition of their co-operation, the Vienna note, either as at first proposed by the Conference, or with the explanatory definitions with which the Emperor of Russia at Olmutz offered to accept it, that they would have injured the 'integrity and independence' of Turkey? Nay, I will not insult you by asking whether, under such circumstances, that 'integrity and independence' would not have been a thousand times more secure than it is at this hour? If that be true, then the 'balance of power' theory has been entirely overthrown by the policy of the Government, for no one will argue that Turkey will come out of her present difficulties more able to cope with the power of Russia than she was before. With her finances hopelessly exhausted, will she ever again be able to raise an

army of 200,000 men? But there are men, and I suspect there are statesmen, in this country, and men in office, too, who believe that Turkey will not be Turkey at the end of this war—that she cannot come out of it an Ottoman Power—that such a convulsion has been created, that while we are ready to contend with half the world to support the 'integrity and independence' of the Ottoman Empire, there will shortly be no Ottoman Empire to take the benefit of the enormous sacrifices we are about to make.

But we are undertaking to repress and to curb Russian aggression. These are catching words; they have been amplified in newspapers, and have passed from mouth to mouth, and have served to blind the eyes of multitudes wholly ignorant of the details of this question. If Turkey has been in danger from the side of Russia heretofore, will she not be in far greater danger when the war is over? Russia is always there. You do not propose to dismember Russia, or to blot out her name from the map, and her history from the records of Europe. Russia will be always there—always powerful, always watchful, and actuated by the same motives of ambition, either of influence or of territory, which are supposed to have moved her in past times. What, then, do you propose to do? and how is Turkey to be secured? Will you make a treaty with Russia, and force conditions upon her? But if so, what security have you that one treaty will be more binding than another? It is easy to find or make a reason for breaking a treaty, when it is the interest of a country to break it.

I recollect reading a statement made by the illustrious Washington, when it was proposed to land a French army in North America, to assist the colonies in overthrowing the yoke of this country. Washington was afraid of them—he did not know whether these allies once landed might not be as difficult to get rid of as the English troops he was endeavouring to expel; for, said he, 'whatever may be the

convention entered into, my experience teaches me that nations and Governments rarely abide by conventions or treaties longer than it is their interest to do so.' So you may make a treaty with Russia; but if Russia is still powerful and ambitious—as she certainly will be—and if Turkey is exhausted and enfeebled by the war—as she certainly will be—then I want to know what guarantee you have, the moment the resources of Russia have recovered from the utmost degree of humiliation and exhaustion to which you may succeed in reducing her, that she will not again insist on terms with Turkey infinitely more perilous than those you have ruined Turkey by urging her to refuse? It is a delusion to suppose you can dismember Russia—that you can blot her from the map of Europe—that you can take guarantees from her, as some seem to imagine, as easily as you take bail from an offender, who would otherwise go to prison for three months. England and France cannot do this with a stroke of the pen, and the sword will equally fail if the attempt be made.

But I come now to another point. How are the interests of England involved in this question? This is, after all, the great matter which we, the representatives of the people of England, have to consider. It is not a question of sympathy with any other State. I have sympathy with Turkey; I have sympathy with the serfs of Russia; I have sympathy with the people of Hungary, whose envoy the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton refused to see, and the overthrow of whose struggle for freedom by the armies of Russia he needlessly justified in this House; I have sympathy with the Italians, subjects of Austria, Naples, and the Pope; I have sympathy with the three millions of slaves in the United States; but it is not on a question of sympathy that I dare involve this country, or any country, in a war which must cost an incalculable amount of treasure and of blood. It is not my duty to make this country the knight-

errant of the human race, and to take upon herself the protection of the thousand millions of human beings who have been permitted by the Creator of all things to people this planet.

I hope no one will assume that I would invite—that is the phrase which has been used—the aggressions of Russia. If I were a Russian, speaking in a Russian Parliament, I should denounce any aggression upon Turkey, as I now blame the policy of our own Government; and I greatly fear I should find myself in a minority, as I now find myself in a minority on this question. But it has never yet been explained how the interests of this country are involved in the present dispute. We are not going to fight for tariffs, or for markets for our exports. In 1791, Mr. Grey argued that, as our imports from Russia exceeded 1,000,000*l.* sterling, it was not desirable that we should go to war with a country trading with us to that amount. In 1853, Russia exported to this country at least 14,000,000*l.* sterling, and that fact affords no proof of the increasing barbarism of Russia, or of any disregard of her own interests as respects the development of her resources. What has passed in this House since the opening of the present session? We had a large surplus revenue, and our Chancellor of the Exchequer is an ambitious Chancellor. I have no hope in any statesman who has no ambition; he can have no great object before him, and his career will be unmarked by any distinguished services to his country.

When the Chancellor of the Exchequer entered office, doubtless he hoped, by great services to his country, to build up a reputation such as a man may labour for and live for. Every man in this House, even those most opposed to him, acknowledged the remarkable capacity which he displayed during the last session, and the country has set its seal to this—that his financial measures, in the remission and readjustment of taxation, were worthy of the approbation of

the great body of the people. The right hon. Gentleman has been blamed for his speech at Manchester, not for making the speech, but because it differed from the tone of the speech made by the noble Lord, his colleague in office, at Greenock. I observed that difference. There can be no doubt that there has been, and that there is now, a great difference of opinion in the Cabinet on this Eastern question. It could not be otherwise; and Government has gone on from one step to another; they have drifted—to use the happy expression of Lord Clarendon to describe what is so truly unhappy—they have drifted from a state of peace to a state of war; and to no Member of the Government could this state of things be more distressing than to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for it dashed from him the hopes he entertained that session after session, as trade extended and the public revenue increased, he would find himself the beneficent dispenser of blessings to the poor, and indeed to all classes of the people of this kingdom. Where is the surplus now? No man dare even ask for it, or for any portion of it.

Here is my right hon. Friend and Colleague, who is resolved on the abolition of the newspaper stamp. I can hardly imagine a more important question than that, if it be desirable for the people to be instructed in their social and political obligations; and yet my right hon. Friend has scarcely the courage to ask for the abolition of that odious tax. I believe, indeed, that my right hon. Friend has a plan to submit to the Chancellor by which the abolition of the stamp may be accomplished without sacrifice to the Exchequer, but that I will not go into at present. But this year's surplus is gone, and next year's surplus is gone with it; and you have already passed a Bill to double the income-tax. And it is a mistake to suppose that you will obtain double the sum by simply doubling the tax. Many persons make an average of their incomes, and make a return accordingly. The average will not be sustained at the bidding of Parliament; and profits that were

considerable last year, will henceforth show a great diminution, or will have vanished altogether. I mention this for the benefit of the country gentlemen, because it is plain that real property, lands and houses, must bear the burden of this war; for I will undertake to say, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will prefer to leave that bench, and will take his seat in some other quarter of the House, rather than retrace the steps which Sir Robert Peel took in 1842. He is not the promoter of this war; his speeches have shown that he is anxious for peace, and that he hoped to be a Minister who might dispense blessings by the remission of taxes to the people; and I do not believe the right hon. Gentleman will consent to be made the instrument to reimpose upon the country the Excise duties which have been repealed, or the Import duties which in past times inflicted such enormous injury upon trade. The property-tax is the lever, or the weapon, with which the proprietors of lands and houses in this kingdom will have to support the 'integrity and independence' of the Ottoman Empire. Gentlemen, I congratulate you, that every man of you has a Turk upon his shoulders.

The hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) spoke of our 'triumphant position'—the position in which the Government has placed us by pledging this country to support the Turks. I see nothing like a triumph in the fact, that in addition to our many duties to our own country, we have accepted the defence of twenty millions or more of the people of Turkey, on whose behalf, but, I believe, not for their benefit, we are about to sacrifice the blood and treasure of England. But there are other penalties and other considerations. I will say little about the Reform Bill, because, as the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) is aware, I do not regard it as an unmixed blessing. But I think even hon. Gentlemen opposite will admit that it would be well if the representation of the people in this House were in a more satisfactory state, and that it is unfortunate that we are not permitted, calmly and with mutual good

feeling, to consider the question, undisturbed by the thunder of artillery and undismayed by the disasters which are inseparable from a state of war.

With regard to trade, I can speak with some authority as to the state of things in Lancashire. The Russian trade is not only at an end, but it is made an offence against the law to deal with any of our customers in Russia. The German trade is most injuriously affected by the uncertainty which prevails on the continent of Europe. The Levant trade, a very important branch, is almost extinguished in the present state of affairs in Greece, Turkey in Europe, and Syria. All property in trade is diminishing in value, whilst its burdens are increasing. The funds have fallen in value to the amount of about 120,000,000*l.* sterling, and railway property is quoted at about 80,000,000*l.* less than was the case a year ago. I do not pretend to ask the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) to put these losses, these great destructions of property, against the satisfaction he feels at the 'triumphant position' at which we have arrived. He may content himself with the dream that we are supporting the 'integrity and independence' of Turkey, though I doubt whether bringing three foreign armies on her soil, raising insurrections in her provinces, and hopelessly exhausting her finances, is a rational mode of maintaining her as an independent Power.

But we are sending out 30,000 troops to Turkey, and in that number are not included the men serving on board the fleets. Here are 30,000 lives! There is a thrill of horror sometimes when a single life is lost, and we sigh at the loss of a friend, or of a casual acquaintance! But here we are in danger of losing—and I give the opinions of military men and not my own merely—10,000, or it may be 20,000 lives, that may be sacrificed in this struggle. I have never pretended to any sympathy for the military profession—but I have sympathy for my fellow-men and fellow-countrymen, wherever they may be. I have heard very melancholy accounts of

the scenes which have been witnessed in the separations from families occasioned by this expedition to the East. But it will be said, and probably the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton will say, that it is a just war, a glorious war, and that I am full of morbid sentimentality, and have introduced topics not worthy to be mentioned in Parliament. But these are matters affecting the happiness of the homes of England, and we, who are the representatives and guardians of those homes, when the grand question of war is before us, should know at least that we have a case—that success is probable—and that an object is attainable, which may be commensurate with the cost of war.

There is another point which gives me some anxiety. You are boasting of an alliance with France. Alliances are dangerous things. It is an alliance with Turkey that has drawn us into this war. I would not advise alliances with any nation, but I would cultivate friendship with all nations. I would have no alliance that might drag us into measures which it is neither our duty nor our interest to undertake. By our present alliance with Turkey, Turkey cannot make peace without the consent of England and France; and by this boasted alliance with France we may find ourselves involved in great difficulties at some future period of these transactions.

I have endeavoured to look at the whole of this question, and I declare, after studying the correspondence which has been laid on the table—knowing what I know of Russia and of Turkey—seeing what I see of Austria and of Prussia—feeling the enormous perils to which this country is now exposed, I am amazed at the course which the Government have pursued, and I am horrified at the results to which their policy must inevitably tend. I do not say this in any spirit of hostility to the Government. I have never been hostile to them. I have once or twice felt it my duty to speak, with some degree of sharpness, of particular Members of the Administration, but I suspect that in private they

would admit that my censure was merited. But I have never entertained a party hostility to the Government. I know something of the difficulties they have had to encounter, and I have no doubt that, in taking office, they acted in as patriotic a spirit as is generally expected from Members of this House. So long as their course was one which I could support, or even excuse, they have had my support. But this is not an ordinary question; it is not a question of reforming the University of Oxford, or of abolishing 'ministers' money' in Ireland; the matter now before us affects the character, the policy, and the vital interests of the Empire; and when I think the Government have committed a grievous—it may be a fatal error—I am bound to tell them so.

I am told indeed that the war is popular, and that it is foolish and eccentric to oppose it. I doubt if the war is very popular in this House. But as to what is, or has been popular, I may ask, what was more popular than the American war? There were persons lately living in Manchester who had seen the recruiting party going through the principal streets of that city, accompanied by the parochial clergy in full canonicals, exhorting the people to enlist to put down the rebels in the American colonies. Where is now the popularity of that disastrous and disgraceful war, and who is the man to defend it? But if hon. Members will turn to the correspondence between George III and Lord North, on the subject of that war, they will find that the King's chief argument for continuing the war was, that it would be dishonourable in him to make peace so long as the war was popular with the people. Again, what war could be more popular than the French war? Has not the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) said, not long ago, in this House, that peace was rendered difficult if not impossible by the conduct of the English press in 1803? For myself, I do not trouble myself whether my conduct in Parliament is popular or not. I care only that it shall be wise and just as regards the

permanent interests of my country, and I despise from the bottom of my heart the man who speaks a word in favour of this war, or of any war which he believes might have been avoided, merely because the press and a portion of the people urge the Government to enter into it.

I recollect a passage of a distinguished French writer and statesman which bears strongly upon our present position: he says,—

'The country which can comprehend and act upon the lessons which God has given it in the past events of its history, is secure in the most imminent crises of its fate.'

The past events of our history have taught me that the intervention of this country in European wars is not only unnecessary, but calamitous; that we have rarely come out of such intervention having succeeded in the objects we fought for; that a debt of 800,000,000*l.* sterling has been incurred by the policy which the noble Lord approves, apparently for no other reason than that it dates from the time of William III; and that, not debt alone has been incurred, but that we have left Europe at least as much in chains as before a single effort was made by us to rescue her from tyranny. I believe, if this country, seventy years ago, had adopted the principle of non-intervention in every case where her interests were not directly and obviously assailed, that she would have been saved from much of the pauperism and brutal crimes by which our Government and people have alike been disgraced. This country might have been a garden, every dwelling might have been of marble, and every person who treads its soil might have been sufficiently educated. We should indeed have had less of military glory. We might have had neither Trafalgar nor Waterloo; but we should have set the high example of a Christian nation, free in its institutions, courteous and just in its conduct towards all foreign States, and resting its policy on the unchangeable foundation of Christian morality.

# RUSSIA.

## II.

### ENLISTMENT OF FOREIGNERS BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 22, 1854.

*From Hansard.*

At this hour of the night I shall not make a speech; but I wish to say a few things in answer to the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, who has very strangely misapprehended—I am not allowed to say 'misrepresented'—what fell from my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding. The noble Lord began by saying that my hon. Friend had charged the Government with making war in something of a propagandist spirit in favour of nationalities throughout the Continent; but that was the exact contrary of what my hon. Friend did say. What he said was, that that portion of the people of this country who had clamoured for war, and whose opinion formed the basis whereupon the Government grounded their plea for the popularity of the war, were in favour of the setting up of nationalities; but my hon. Friend showed that the Government had no such object, and the war no such tendency. The next misrepresentation was, that my hon. Friend had spoken in favour of the *status quo;* but there is not the shadow of a shade of truth in that statement. What my hon. Friend said was precisely the contrary;

but the noble Lord, arguing from his own misapprehension of my hon. Friend's meaning, went on then to show that it would not do to establish a peace on the *status quo* terms, thus knocking down a position which nobody had set up. The noble Lord was also guilty of another mistake with reference to an observation of my hon. Friend as to the character and position of the Turks. We have referred over and over again to a monstrous statement made by the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton as to the improvement of the Turks—a statement which is contradicted by all facts. To-night, with a disingenuousness which I should be ashamed to use in argument—[Cries of 'Oh!']—it is very well for hon. Gentlemen who come down to cheer a Minister to cry 'Oh!' but is it a fact, or is it not? Is there a man who hears me who does not know perfectly well, when the noble Lord said that the Turks had improved within the last twenty years more than any other nation in Europe, that the statement referred not to the Christians, whose rights and interests we were defending, but to the character of the Mahometan population? But to-night, with a disingenuousness which I could not condescend to be guilty of, the noble Lord has assumed that the statement referred to the condition of the Christian population.

The real question was, as every hon. Gentleman knows, What was the condition of the Mahometan? and there is not a Gentleman in this House who is not aware that the Mahometan portion of the population of the Turkish Empire is in a decaying and dying condition, and that the two great Empires which have undertaken to set it on its legs again will find it about the most difficult task in which they ever were engaged. What do your own officers say? Here is an extract from a letter which appeared in the papers the other day:—

'They ought to set these rascally Turks to mend them [the roads], which might easily be done, as under the clay there is plenty of capital stone. They are, I am sorry to say, bringing more of those brutes into the Crimea, which makes more mouths to feed, without being of any use.'

I have seen a private letter, too, from an able and distinguished officer in the Crimea, who says—

'Half of us do not know what we are fighting for, and the other half only pray that we may not be fighting for the Turks.'

The only sign of improvement which has been manifested that I know of is, that on a great emergency, when their Empire, under the advice of Her Majesty's Government, and that of their Ambassador, was placed in a situation of great peril, the Turks managed to make an expiring effort, and to get up an army which the Government, so far as I can hear, has since permitted to be almost destroyed.

Another sign of improvement is, perhaps, that they have begun to wear trowsers; but as to their commerce, their industry, or their revenue, nothing can be in a worse condition. You have now two Empires attempting to set the Turkish Empire up again; and it is said that a third great Empire is also about to engage in the task. The Turk wants to borrow money, but he cannot borrow it to-day in the London market at less than from eight to nine per cent. Russia, on the other hand, is an Empire against which three great Empires, if Turkey can be counted one still, are now combined, and it is said that a fourth great Empire will soon join the ranks of its enemies. But Russian funds at this moment are very little lower than the stock of the London and North-Western Railway. You have engaged to set this Turkish Empire up again—a task in which everybody knows you must fail—and you have persuaded the Turk to enter into a contest, one of the very first proceedings in which has forced him to mortgage to the English capitalist a very large portion—and the securest portion, too, of his revenues—namely, that which he derives from Egypt, amounting in fact, in a fiscal and financial point of view, to an actual dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, by a separation of Egypt from it. Why is it that the noble Lord has to-night come forward as the defender of the Greeks? Is it that

he has discovered, when this war is over, that Turkey, which he has undertaken to protect, the Empire which he is to defend and sustain against the Emperor of Russia, will have been smothered under his affectionate embrace? or, to quote the powerful language of the *Times*, when the Vienna note was refused, that whatever else may be the result of the war in which Turkey has plunged Europe, this one thing is certain, that at its conclusion there may be no Turkish Empire to talk about?

The noble Lord quoted a letter which I wrote some time ago, and which, like others who have discussed it, he found it not easy to answer. In that letter I referred to Don Pacifico's case; and I am sure that the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton will remember a despatch which he received through Baron Brunnow, from Count Nesselrode, on that subject, —a despatch which I think the House will forgive my reading to it on the present occasion, as it gives the Russian Government's estimation of that act of 'material guarantee' on the part of England:—

'It remains to be seen whether Great Britain, abusing the advantages which are afforded her by her immense maritime superiority, intends henceforth to pursue an isolated policy, without caring for those engagements which bind her to the other Cabinets, whether she intends to disengage herself from every obligation, as well as from all community of action, and to authorize all great Powers, on every fitting opportunity, to recognize to the weak no other rule but their own will, no other right but their own physical strength. Your Excellency will please to read this despatch to Lord Palmerston, and to give him a copy of it.'

If there had been no more temper—no more sense—no more unity in the negotiations which took place with regard to this matter, in all probability we might have had a war about it. It was a case in which Russia might have gone to war with this country, if she had been so minded. But Russia did not do that. Fortunately, the negotiations that ensued settled that question without bringing that disaster upon Europe. But the noble Lord again misinterpreted my

hon. Friend (Mr. Cobden). I appeal to every Gentleman who heard my hon. Friend's speech whether the drift of it was not this—that in this quarrel, Prussia, and certainly Austria, had a nearer and stronger interest than England, and that he could not understand why the terms which Austria might consider fair and safe for herself and for Turkey, might not be accepted with honour by this country and by France? Now, I am prepared to show that, from the beginning of this dispute, there is not a single thing which Austria wished to do in the course of the negotiations, or even which France wished to do, that the Government of the noble Lord did not systematically refuse its assent to, and that the noble Lord's Government is alone responsible for the failure in every particular point which took place in these negotiations. I will not trouble the House by going into the history of these negotiations now, further than just to state two facts, which will not take more than a few sentences. The noble Lord referred to the note which Russia wanted Turkey to sign, known as the Menchikoff note; but the noble Lord knows as well as I do, that when the French Ambassador, M. De la Cour, went to Constantinople, or whilst he was at Constantinople, he received express instructions from the Emperor of the French not to take upon himself the responsibility of inciting the Sultan to reject that note. ['No.'] I know this is the fact, because it is stated in Lord Cowley's despatch to the noble Lord.

I am expressing no opinion on the propriety of what was here done; I simply state the fact: and it was through the interference of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe—acting, I presume, in accordance with instructions from our Cabinet, and promising the intervention of the fleets—that the rejection of that note was secured. The next fact I have to mention is this. When in September, last year, the last propositions were drawn up by Counts Buol and Nesselrode, and offered at Olmutz by the Emperor, as a final settlement of the question,

although Austria and Prussia were in favour of those propositions; though Lord Westmoreland himself said (I do not quote his exact words, but their substance) that they were of such a nature as might be received; thus indicating his favourable opinion of them; and though, likewise, the Emperor of the French himself declared that they guarded all the points in which England and France were concerned (for this was stated by Count Walewski when he said that the Emperor was prepared to order his Ambassador at Constantinople to sign them along with the other Ambassadors, and to offer them to the Porte in exchange for the Vienna note), nevertheless, the Earl of Clarendon wrote, not in a very statesmanlike manner in such an emergency, but in almost a contemptuous tone, that our Government would not, upon any consideration, have anything further to do with the Vienna note. The rejection, first of the amended Menchikoff note, and then of the Olmütz note, was a policy adopted solely by the Government of this country, and only concurred in, but not recommended, by the French Government and the other Governments of Europe. Whether this policy was right or wrong, there can be no doubt of the fact; and I am prepared to stake my reputation for accuracy and for a knowledge of the English language on this interpretation of the documents which have been laid before us. That being so, on what pretence could we expect that Austria should go to war in company with us for objects far beyond what she thought satisfactory at the beginning? or why should we ask the Emperor of the French to go to war for objects which he did not contemplate, and to insist on conditions which, in the month of September of last year, he thought wholly unnecessary?

But one fact more I hope the House will allow me to state. There is a despatch in existence which was never produced to the people of this country, but which made its first appearance in a St. Petersburg newspaper, and was afterwards

published in the Paris journals—a despatch in which the Emperor of the French, or his Minister, urged the Russian Government to accept the Vienna note on the express ground —I give the exact words—that 'its general sense differed in nothing from the sense of the original propositions of Prince Menchikoff.' Why, Sir, can there be dissimulation more extraordinary—can there be guilt more conclusive than that this Government should act as it did, after it had recommended the Emperor of Russia to accept the Vienna note? For the noble Lord has told us, over and over again, that the Government of England concurred in all the steps taken by the French Government. The House will allow me to read the very words of the despatch, for, after all, this is no very small matter. I have an English translation, but the French original is underneath, and any hon. Gentleman who chooses may see it. The despatch is from M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Foreign Minister, who states:—

'That which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg ought to desire is an act of the Porte, which testifies that it has taken into serious consideration the mission of Prince Menchikoff, and that it renders homage to the sympathies which an identity of religion inspires in the Emperor Nicholas for all Christians of the Eastern rite.'

And farther on:—

'They [the French Government] submit it to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg with the hope that it will find that its general sense differs in nothing from the sense of the proposition presented by Prince Menchikoff.'

The French words are:—

'Que son sens général ne diffère en rien du sens du projet présenté par M. le Prince Menchikoff.'

It then goes on:—

'And that it gives it satisfaction on all the essential points of its demands. The slight variation in the form of it will not be observed by the masses of the people, either in Russia or in Turkey. To their eyes, the step taken by the Porte [that is, in accepting it] will preserve all the signification which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg wishes to give it; and His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas will appear to them always as the powerful and respected protector of their religious faith.'

This despatch was written, recommending *la note Française;* which is the basis of, and is in reality and substance the same thing with, the Vienna note; but, up to this moment, neither the Government of France nor the Government of which the noble Lord is a Member has for an instant denied the justice—I do not say the extent or degree—but the justice of the claim made on the part of the Russian Government against the Turks; and now they turn round upon their own note and tell you that there was a different construction put upon it. Was there any construction put upon it, which was different from the recommendation here made and the argument used by the French Government? No; and the whole of that statement is a statement that is delusive, and if I were not in this House I would characterize it by a harsher epithet. I say now what I stated in March last, and what I have since said and written to the country, that you are making war against the Government which accepted your own terms of peace; and I state this now only for the purpose of urging upon the House and upon the Government that you are bound at least, after making war for many months, to exact no further terms from the State with which you are at war, than such as will give that security which at first you believed to be necessary; and that if you carry on a war for vengeance—if you carry on a war for conquest—if you carry on a war for purposes of Government at home, as many wars have been carried on in past times, I say you will be guilty of a heinous crime, alike in the eyes of God and of man.

One other remark perhaps the House will permit me to make. The noble Lord spoke very confidently to-night; and a very considerable portion of his speech—hoping, as I do, for the restoration of peace at some time or another—was to me not very satisfactory. I think that he would only be acting a more statesmanlike part if, in his speeches, he were at least to abstain from those trifling but still irritating

charges which he is constantly making against the Russian Government. I can conceive one nation going to war with another nation; but why should the noble Lord say, 'The Sovereign of that State does not allow Bibles to be circulated—he suppressed this thing here, and he put down something else there'? What did one of the noble Lord's present colleagues say of the Government of our ally? Did he not thank God that his despotism could not suppress or gag our newspaper press, and declare that the people of France were subject to the worst tyranny in Europe? These statements from a Minister—from one who has been Prime Minister, and who, for aught I know, may be again Prime Minister—show a littleness that I did not expect from a statesman of this country, whose fate and whose interests hang on every word the noble Lord utters, and when the fate of thousands, aye, and of tens of thousands, may depend on whether the noble Lord should make one false step in the position in which he is now placed.

And when terrible calamities were coming upon your army, where was this Government? One Minister was in Scotland, another at the sea-side, and for six weeks no meeting of the Cabinet took place. I do not note when Cabinets are held—I sometimes observe that they sit for four or five hours at a time, and then I think something is wrong—but for six weeks, or two months, it is said no meeting of the Ministers was held. The noble Lord President was making a small speech on a great subject somewhere in Cumberland. At Bedford he descanted on the fate of empires, forgetting that there was nothing so likely to destroy an empire as unnecessary wars. At Bristol he was advocating a new History of England, which, if impartially written, I know not how the noble Lord's policy for the last few months will show to posterity. The noble Lord the Member for Tiverton undertook a more difficult task—a labour left unaccomplished by Voltaire—and, when he addressed the Hampshire peasantry,

in one short sentence he overturned the New Testament and destroyed the foundations of the Christian religion.

Now, Sir, I have only to speak on one more point. My hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding, in what he said about the condition of the English army in the Crimea, I believe expressed only that which all in this House feel, and which, I trust, every person in this country capable of thinking feels. When I look at Gentlemen on that bench, and consider all their policy has brought about within the last twelve months, I scarcely dare trust myself to speak of them, either in or out of their presence. We all know what we have lost in this House. Here, sitting near me, very often sat the Member for Frome (Colonel Boyle). I met him a short time before he went out, at Mr. Westerton's, the bookseller, near Hyde Park Corner. I asked him whether he was going out? He answered, he was afraid he was; not afraid in the sense of personal fear—he knew not that; but he said, with a look and a tone I shall never forget, 'It is no light matter for a man who has a wife and five little children.' The stormy Euxine is his grave; his wife is a widow, his children fatherless. On the other side of the House sat a Member, with whom I was not acquainted, who has lost his life, and another of whom I knew something (Colonel Blair). Who is there that does not recollect his frank, amiable, and manly countenance? I doubt whether there were any men on either side of the House who were more capable of fixing the goodwill and affection of those with whom they were associated. Well, but the place that knew them shall know them no more for ever.

I have specified only two; but there are a hundred officers who have been killed in battle, or who have died of their wounds; forty have died of disease; and more than two hundred others have been wounded more or less severely. This has been a terribly destructive war to officers. They have been, as one would have expected them to be, the first in valour as the

first in place; they have suffered more in proportion to their numbers than the commonest soldiers in the ranks. This has spread sorrow over the whole country. I was in the House of Lords when the vote of thanks was moved. In the gallery were many ladies, three-fourths of whom were dressed in the deepest mourning. Is this nothing? And in every village, cottages are to be found into which sorrow has entered, and, as I believe, through the policy of the Ministry, which might have been avoided. No one supposes that the Government wished to spread the pall of sorrow over the land; but this we had a right to expect, that they would at least show becoming gravity in discussing a subject the appalling consequences of which may come home to individuals and to the nation. I recollect when Sir Robert Peel addressed the House on a dispute which threatened hostilities with the United States,—I recollect the gravity of his countenance, the solemnity of his tone, his whole demeanour showing that he felt in his soul the responsibility that rested on him.

I have seen this, and I have seen the present Ministry. There was the buffoonery at the Reform Club. Was that becoming a matter of this grave nature? Has there been a solemnity of manner in the speeches heard in connection with this war—and have Ministers shown themselves statesmen and Christian men when speaking on a subject of this nature? It is very easy for the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton to rise and say that I am against war under all circumstances; and that if an enemy were to land on our shores, I should make a calculation as to whether it would be cheaper to take him in or keep him out, and that my opinion on this question is not to be considered either by Parliament or the country. I am not afraid of discussing the war with the noble Lord on his own principles. I understand the Blue Books as well as he; and, leaving out all fantastic and visionary notions about what will become of us if something is not done to destroy or to cripple Russia, I say—and I say it with as much confidence

as I ever said anything in my life—that the war cannot be justified out of these documents; and that impartial history will teach this to posterity if we do not comprehend it now.

I am not, nor did I ever pretend to be, a statesman; and that character is so tainted and so equivocal in our day, that I am not sure that a pure and honourable ambition would aspire to it. I have not enjoyed for thirty years, like these noble Lords, the honours and emoluments of office. I have not set my sails to every passing breeze. I am a plain and simple citizen, sent here by one of the foremost constituencies of the Empire, representing feebly, perhaps, but honestly, I dare aver, the opinions of very many, and the true interests of all those who have sent me here. Let it not be said that I am alone in my condemnation of this war, and of this incapable and guilty Administration. And, even if I were alone, if mine were a solitary voice, raised amid the din of arms and the clamours of a venal press, I should have the consolation I have to-night—and which I trust will be mine to the last moment of my existence—the priceless consolation that no word of mine has tended to promote the squandering of my country's treasure or the spilling of one single drop of my country's blood.

# RUSSIA.

## III.

### NEGOTIATIONS AT VIENNA.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 23, 1855.

*From Hansard.*

[On February 22 Lord Palmerston announced in the House of Commons that Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Sidney Herbert, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Cardwell, the President of the Board of Trade, and Sir James Graham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had resigned the offices which they had accepted a fortnight before. The ground of this secession was the impression entertained by the above-named personages that the Committee of Inquiry moved for by Mr. Roebuck was equivalent to a vote of censure on them, as they had formed part of the Government of Lord Aberdeen, whose conduct of the Russian war was impugned by the appointment of the Committee. The places vacated by these secessions were filled up on February 28.]

I AM one of those forming the majority of the House, I suspect, who are disposed to look upon our present position as one of more than ordinary gravity. I am one, also, of those, not probably constituting so great a majority of the House, who regret extremely the circumstances which have obliged the right hon. Gentlemen who are now upon this bench to secede from the Government of the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton. I do not take upon me for a moment to condemn them; because I think, if there be anything in which a man must judge for himself, it is whether he should

take office if it be offered to him, whether he should secede from office, whether he should serve under a particular leader, or engage in the service of the Crown, or retain office in a particular emergency. In such cases I think that the decision must be left to his own conscience and his own judgment; and I should be the last person to condemn any one for the decision to which he might come. I think, however, that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman is one which the House cannot have listened to without being convinced that he and his retiring Colleagues have been moved to the course which they have taken by a deliberate judgment upon this question, which, whether it be right or wrong, is fully explained, and is honest to the House and to the country.

Now, Sir, I said that I regretted their secession, because I am one of those who do not wish to see the Government of the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton overthrown. The House knows well, and nobody knows better than the noble Lord, that I have never been one of his ardent and enthusiastic supporters. I have often disapproved of his policy both at home and abroad; but I hope that I do not bear to him, as I can honestly say that I do not bear to any man in this House—for from all I have received unnumbered courtesies—any feeling that takes even the tinge of a personal animosity; and even if I did, at a moment so grave as this, no feeling of a personal character whatever should prevent me from doing that which I think now, of all times, we are called upon to do—that which we honestly and conscientiously believe to be for the permanent interests of the country. We are in this position, that for a month past, at least, there has been a chaos in the regions of the Administration. Nothing can be more embarrassing—I had almost said nothing can be more humiliating—than the position which we offer to the country; and I am afraid that the knowledge of our position is not confined to the limits of these islands.

It will be admitted that we want a Government; that if the country is to be saved from the breakers which now surround it, there must be a Government; and it devolves upon the House of Commons to rise to the gravity of the occasion, and to support any man who is conscious of his responsibility, and who is honestly offering and endeavouring to deliver the country from the embarrassment in which we now find it. We are at war, and I shall not say one single sentence with regard to the policy of the war or its origin, and I know not that I shall say a single sentence with regard to the conduct of it; but the fact is that we are at war with the greatest military Power, probably, of the world, and that we are carrying on our operations at a distance of 3,000 miles from home, and in the neighbourhood of the strongest fortifications of that great military Empire. I will not stop to criticise—though it really invites me—the fact that some who have told us that we were in danger from the aggressions of that Empire, at the same time told us that that Empire was powerless for aggression, and also that it was impregnable to attack. By some means, however, the public have been alarmed as if that aggressive power were unbounded, and they have been induced to undertake an expedition, as if the invasion of an impregnable country were a matter of holiday-making rather than of war.

But we are now in a peculiar position with regard to that war; for, if I am not mistaken—and I think I gathered as much from the language of the right hon. Gentleman—at this very moment terms have been agreed upon—agreed upon by the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen; consented to by the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton when he was in that Cabinet; and ratified and confirmed by him upon the formation of his own Government—and that those terms are now specifically known and understood; and that they have been offered to the Government with which this country is at war, and in conjunction with France and Austria—one, certainly, and the

other supposed to be, an ally of this country. Now, those terms consist of four propositions, which I shall neither describe nor discuss, because they are known to the House; but three of them are not matters of dispute; and with regard to the other, I think that the noble Lord the Member for the City of London stated, upon a recent occasion, that it was involved in this proposition—that the preponderant power of Russia in the Black Sea should cease, and that Russia had accepted it with that interpretation. Therefore, whatever difference arises is merely as to the mode in which that 'preponderant power' shall be understood or made to cease. Now, there are some Gentlemen not far from me—there are men who write in the public press—there are thousands of persons in the United Kingdom at this moment—and I learn with astonishment and dismay that there are persons even in that grave assembly which we are not allowed to specify by a name in this House—who have entertained dreams—impracticable theories—expectations of vast European and Asiatic changes, of revived nationalities, and of a new map of Europe, if not of the world, as a result or an object of this war. And it is from those Gentlemen that we hear continually, addressed to the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton, language which I cannot well understand. They call upon him to act, to carry on the war with vigour, and to prosecute enterprises which neither his Government nor any other Government has ever seriously entertained; but I would appeal to those Gentlemen whether it does not become us—regarding the true interests and the true honour of the country—if our Government have offered terms of peace to Russia, not to draw back from those terms, not to cause any unnecessary delay, not to adopt any subterfuge to prevent those terms being accepted, not to attempt shuffles of any kind, not to endeavour to insist upon harder terms, and thus make the approach of peace even still more distant than it is at present?

Whatever may be said about the honour of the country in

any other relation involved in this affair, this, at least, I expect every man who hears me to admit—that if terms of peace have been offered they have been offered in good faith, and shall be in honour and good faith adhered to; so that if, unfortunately for Europe and humanity, there should be any failure at Vienna, no man should point to the English Government and to the authorities and rulers of this Christian country, and say that we have prolonged the war and the infinite calamities of which it is the cause.

I have said that I was anxious that the Government of the noble Lord should not be overthrown. Will the House allow me to say why I am so? The noble Lord at the head of the Government has long been a great authority with many persons in this country upon foreign policy. His late colleague, and present envoy to Vienna, has long been a great authority with a large portion of the people of this country upon almost all political questions. With the exception of that unhappy selection of an ambassador at Constantinople, I hold that there are no men in this country more truly responsible for our present position in this war than the noble Lord who now fills the highest office in the State and the noble Lord who is now, I trust, rapidly approaching the scene of his labours in Vienna. I do not say this now to throw blame upon those noble Lords, because their policy, which I hold to be wrong, they, without doubt, as firmly believe to be right; but I am only stating facts. It has been their policy that they have entered into war for certain objects, and I am sure that neither the noble Lord at the head of the Government nor his late colleague the noble Lord the Member for London will shrink from the responsibility which attaches to them. Well, Sir, now we have those noble Lords in a position which is, in my humble opinion, favourable to the termination of the troubles which exist. I think that the noble Lord at the head of the Government himself would have more influence in stilling

whatever may exist of clamour in this country than any other Member of this House. I think, also, that the noble Lord the Member for London would not have undertaken the mission to Vienna if he had not entertained some strong belief that, by so doing, he might bring the war to an end. Nobody gains reputation by a failure in negotiation, and as that noble Lord is well acquainted with the whole question from beginning to end, I entertain a hope—I will not say a sanguine hope—that the result of that mission to Vienna will be to bring about a peace, to extricate this country from some of those difficulties inseparable from a state of war.

There is one subject upon which I should like to put a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I shall not say one word here about the state of the army in the Crimea, or one word about its numbers or its condition. Every Member of this House, every inhabitant of this country, has been sufficiently harrowed with details regarding it. To my solemn belief, thousands—nay, scores of thousands of persons—have retired to rest, night after night, whose slumbers have been disturbed or whose dreams have been based upon the sufferings and agonies of our soldiers in the Crimea. I should like to ask the noble Lord at the head of the Government—although I am not sure if he will feel that he can or ought to answer the question—whether the noble Lord the Member for London has power, after discussions have commenced, and as soon as there shall be established good grounds for believing that the negotiations for peace will prove successful, to enter into any armistice? ['No! no!']

I know not, Sir, who it is that says 'No, no,' but I should like to see any man get up and say that the destruction of 200,000 human lives lost on all sides during the course of this unhappy conflict is not a sufficient sacrifice. You are not pretending to conquer territory—you are not pretending to hold fortified or unfortified towns; you have offered terms

of peace which, as I understand them, I do not say are not moderate; and breathes there a man in this House or in this country whose appetite for blood is so insatiable that, even when terms of peace have been offered and accepted, he pines for that assault in which of Russian, Turk, French and English, as sure as one man dies, 20,000 corpses will strew the streets of Sebastopol? I say I should like to ask the noble Lord—and I am sure that he will feel, and that this House will feel, that I am speaking in no unfriendly manner towards the Government of which he is at the head—I should like to know, and I venture to hope that it is so, if the noble Lord the Member for London has power, at the earliest stage of these proceedings at Vienna, at which it can properly be done —and I should think that it might properly be done at a very early stage—to adopt a course by which all further waste of human life may be put an end to, and further animosity between three great nations be, as far as possible, prevented?

I appeal to the noble Lord at the head of the Government and to this House; I am not now complaining of the war—I am not now complaining of the terms of peace, nor, indeed, of anything that has been done—but I wish to suggest to this House what, I believe, thousands and tens of thousands of the most educated and of the most Christian portion of the people of this country are feeling upon this subject, although, indeed, in the midst of a certain clamour in the country, they do not give public expression to their feelings. Your country is not in an advantageous state at this moment; from one end of the kingdom to the other there is a general collapse of industry. Those Members of this House not intimately acquainted with the trade and commerce of the country do not fully comprehend our position as to the diminution of employment and the lessening of wages. An increase in the cost of living is finding its way to the homes and hearts of a vast number of the labouring population.

At the same time there is growing up—and, notwith-

standing what some hon. Members of this House may think of me, no man regrets it more than I do—a bitter and angry feeling against that class which has for a long period conducted the public affairs of this country. I like political changes when such changes are made as the result, not of passion, but of deliberation and reason. Changes so made are safe, but changes made under the influence of violent exaggeration, or of the violent passions of public meetings, are not changes usually approved by this House or advantageous to the country. I cannot but notice, in speaking to Gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to any one I meet between this House and any of those localities we frequent when this House is up—I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

I tell the noble Lord, that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The

noble Lord has been for more than forty years a Member of this House. Before I was born, he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career — whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her councils—he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition: that he had returned the sword to the scabbard—that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow—that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war.

# RUSSIA.

## IV.

### ON THE PROSECUTION OF THE RUSSIAN WAR.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 7, 1855.

*From Hansard.*

[On May 22 Mr. Disraeli moved, 'That this House cannot adjourn for the Recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty's Government in reference to the great question of peace or war, and that, under these circumstances, the House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for the country a safe and honourable peace.' This was met by an amendment from Sir Francis Baring, 'That this House, having seen with regret that the Conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace.' Mr. Disraeli's resolution was rejected by 319 votes to 219. Sir F. Baring's motion having become substantive, was met by an amendment of Mr. Lowe, to the effect, 'That this House having seen with regret, owing to the refusal of Russia to restrict the strength of her navy in the Black Sea, that the Conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that the means of coming to an agreement on the third basis of negotiation being by that refusal exhausted, it will continue,' &c. Mr. Lowe's amendment was negatived and Sir F. Baring's motion carried without a division on June 8.]

Last year, when the declaration of war was brought down to the House, I took the opportunity of addressing the House in opposition to the policy of the Government of that day.

I was told I was too late; and it has been also said repeatedly in this debate that those who take the views which I take are too late on this occasion. It seems to be one of the consequences of the, I would say, irresponsible system of diplomacy in this country with regard to foreign affairs, that we are never allowed to discuss a mischief when it is growing, but only when it is completed, and when no remedy can be applied. And now we are at liberty to discuss the conduct of the Government in the Conferences at Vienna; and, though we were repeatedly told from the Treasury bench that it might be injurious to the public service to discuss what was going on till the affair was concluded, I suspect the House has come to the conclusion that we have been pursuing our true duty to the country in the debate that has taken place.

We are indebted to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) for having placed his notice on the table of the House, and not less to my right hon. Friend and Colleague that he, before the recess, moved the adjournment of the debate. I am satisfied myself that the people of this country have no intention to go wrong either in home or foreign affairs, and it requires only that questions of this nature should be frequently discussed by the intelligent men of which this House is composed to set before them the true state of affairs, and to bring them to a wise opinion with regard to the policy which is being pursued. Now, we are not discussing the policy of the war—that is, of the origin of the war. If we were, I should lay claim to some degree of foresight in the opinion which I expressed a year ago, for there seems to be a general feeling that the sacrifices that have already been made are somewhat greater than the results that have been obtained. I am anxious, in the observations I may have to address to the House, to impress my opinions on them, if it be possible to do so, and to lay before my countrymen out of the House that which I believe involves their true interests with regard

to this question. It is necessary, therefore, to have a basis for our discussion—to fix what were the objects of the war—to ascertain, if that be possible, whether those objects have been secured and accomplished—and whether there can be anything in prospect which we are likely to gain that will justify the Government and the House in proceeding further with the war.

Now, in my observations I am not about to carry on this discussion with the Gentlemen below me, who are interested in a question which is not the question before the House. They are interested in some vast, and, as it seems to me, imaginary scheme that would involve Europe in protracted and widely-extended hostilities; and I think that, so far as the House is concerned in discussing the question with the Government, these Gentlemen are almost, if not altogether, out of court. It appears to me, if they were logical in their course, finding that the objects of the Government and the objects of the Government of France were entirely different from those which they have at heart, and believing, as they do, that the objects of the allied Governments are not worth a war, that they ought rather to join us on this bench, and, instead of there being one Peace bench in the House, there would be two Peace benches, and the Peace party would clearly gain a considerable accession of strength. The noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies has stated over and over again—and, amid the confusion of statements which he and his Colleagues have made, I think he will not find fault if I assume that the object of the war is simply the security of the Turkish territory from the grasp of Russia, and probably from the grasp of any other Power—the noble Lord has stated that he apprehends that if Russia were to extend her empire by the possession of Turkey, it would give her a power that would be unsafe with regard to the other nations of Europe. When the noble Lord speaks in that vague, and, if I were not speaking of a man so eminent, I should say, absurd language of the

liberties of Europe and the civilization of the world, I should say he means by that merely those great objects, so far as they can be conserved by the conservation of the Turkish territory.

The noble Lord tells us—we are now getting out of some of the mystifications—that he has no kind of sympathy that would lead him into war for the oppressed nationalities of Europe. The noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston) a few nights ago turned the cold shoulder to the people of Hungary. He said he thought there could be no greater calamity to Europe than that Hungary should be separated from the Austrian Empire. Well, then, we have got rid of Hungary; and, next, the noble Lord the Member for the City of London (Lord John Russell) tells us it is quite a mistake to suppose that he ever intended to go to war for Poland. In fact, he stated—what will be very disheartening to hon. Gentlemen below me—that he never supposed we were going to war for such a Quixotic object; that the case of Poland is one that is hopeless, and therefore it would be madness in England and France—not indiscretion—not a doubtful undertaking—but positive madness in England and France to take any part in promoting resistance in that country.

Having now got rid of Hungary and Poland, we only require that some Member of the Cabinet should get up later in the evening—and that I have no doubt will be the case—to state that it is utterly impossible for this country to involve itself in hostilities with a view to the regeneration of any part of Italy. The noble Lord the Member for London tells us we are not going to war for the sake of conquest; and that, I think, is a matter which ought to be kept in mind by hon. Gentlemen who are urging the Government on to a prolonged war. He stated on Tuesday night, 'Be it always remembered that we are seeking no object of our own;'—it would be a very odd thing if we were to go to war for the objects of somebody else—'that we are seeking no object of our own:

that when peace is concluded we shall not have acquired one ell of new territory, or secured any advantage whatever for ourselves. It is for Turkey and the general system of Europe that we are struggling.' In fact, the whole matter always resolves itself into some general mystification, and at this moment we are, every man of us, almost entirely in the dark as to what are the ultimate objects of the war.

One other point that I ought to mention is the question of crippling and humbling Russia. I am, of course, willing to admit that when people go to war they are not expected to be very nice in their treatment of each other, and, if the taking of Sebastopol be an object of those who are in favour of the war, to take Sebastopol they will inflict any injury they can upon Russia. But the noble Lord told us last year that he still intended to leave Russia a great empire. I thought that exceedingly considerate of the noble Lord, and I understand—I think it has been stated in the public papers—that it is considered at St. Petersburg a great condescension on the part of so eminent a statesman. Well, then, if we are not going to war for nationalities, nor for conquest, nor for any such crippling of Russia as would be effected by her dismemberment, we come to this simple question—in the condition in which Turkey has long existed, what are the means by which the security of Turkey can be best guaranteed? No man asserts that the security of Turkey can be absolute, but that it must be partial and conditional. As it is well to have high authority for these statements, I have here an extract from a speech made by Lord Clarendon a few nights ago on the Resolution moved by Lord Grey. The noble Lord then stated:—

'My noble Friend says, and says truly, that the attainment of all this would offer no security to Turkey. The value of a treaty must always depend upon the spirit in which it is agreed to, and the good faith with which it is entered into. No treaty can make a weak Power like Turkey perfectly safe against a powerful neighbour immediately in contact with her, if that neighbour is determined to act the aggressive towards her.'—[3 *Hansard*, cxxxviii. 1152.]

Thus Lord Clarendon admits, what is perfectly obvious to the common sense of all who have heard anything of Russia or Turkey, except from the lips of the Prime Minister, that what we are seeking to obtain is not an absolute security for Turkey, but a conditional security, such as her circumstances, her population, her government, and geographical position render attainable by her friends and allies. We have now been fourteen months at war, and two Cabinets—the Cabinets of Lord Aberdeen and of the present First Minister—I might say four Cabinets, for the Cabinets of France and Austria must have agreed to the same thing—have agreed to certain terms, and have offered them to Russia. They have been accepted as the basis of negotiations, conferences have been opened, and certain proceedings towards a settlement have taken place; and now I should like to know whether the terms which were offered were offered in earnest. Judging of the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen by the conduct of some of its Members, and especially of Lord Aberdeen himself, I am certain that they were sincere in the terms they offered. But the *Times* newspaper, which now in its many changes has become the organ and great stimulant of the present Cabinet, expresses its astonishment that any person should think that peace was intended by the Conferences at Vienna. The *Times* states that the object of the Conferences was not to bring about a peace, but to shame Austria into becoming a faithful and warlike ally.

Now, when the noble Lord the Member for London was sent to Vienna to negotiate, I confess I was one of those who formed the opinion that the noble Lord, amid the many eccentricities of his career, would not have undertaken that mission unless he himself had been honest with regard to the terms to be offered, and anxious, if possible, to consolidate a peace. There were, however, certain persons—malicious people, of course—who found out that it would be convenient to the First Minister to have the noble Lord at a distance,

at least for a time. But I never adopted that idea. I did not believe that the noble Lord's journey to Vienna, with a retinue that required him to occupy no less than thirty-two rooms in one hotel, would have been undertaken unless the noble Lord considered that the object was a reality, on which the interests of the country and of Europe depended. I think he would have been the last man in the country to lend himself to such a miserable hoax as going to Vienna, not to make peace, but to shame Austria into becoming a faithful and warlike ally. I assume, therefore, that terms were sincerely offered, and that those terms gave guarantees which were sufficient, and a security which was as ample as the circumstances admitted for the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. It is from that starting-point that I would discuss this question.

There are hon. Members in this House who think that even if those terms were obtained they would still be in no degree a compensation for the enormous sacrifices which the country has made. I happen to hold the same opinion, and it was with that conviction that I protested against going into the war. Indeed, I think that the argument I used a year ago, that nothing to be obtained in the war could at all approach a compensation for the enormous sacrifices the country would be called upon to make, has been greatly strengthened. Well, Sir, the terms offered are called 'bases:' from which one understands, not that they are everything, but that they are something capable of what diplomatists call 'development.' I recollect a question asked of a child at school, in one of those lessons called 'object lessons,' 'What is the basis of a batter pudding?' It was obvious that flour was the basis, but the eggs and the butter and the rest were developments and additions. But if the bases are capable of development, so I take it for granted that the meaning of negotiation is not the offering of an *ultimatum*, but the word involves to every man's sense the probability of

concession—butter, it may be—but concession of one sort or another.

I will not go through all the Four Points, because the attention of the House ought really to be centred upon the third article and the matters connected with it. The House must remember that this article involves two most important subjects—first, the territorial guarantee, which if it were sufficiently secured would be everything the House and the country required from the war—namely, that the territories of Turkey shall never be molested, so long as the treaty shall continue, by any of the great Powers who are parties to such treaty; and, secondly, that the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea shall cease. Now, the territorial guarantee was granted without difficulty. [An hon. Member: 'No.'] Well, no difficulty was made about the territorial guarantee but this:—Prince Gortchakoff said, very wisely, that he would not enter into an absolute pledge to go to war in case of any infraction of the treaty, and the noble Lord who said 'No' will find, when he has examined the question a little more closely, that it does not make the slightest difference as to the actual results of a treaty whether a Power guarantees in the mode proposed by Russia, or in the manner proposed by the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, because, when an infraction of a treaty occurs, the power of judging whether any of the Governments who are parties to such treaty should go to war or not, is left with each individual Government. If, for example, France stretched her dominions westward towards Morocco, or eastward towards Tunis or Tripoli, it would, of course, have been the duty, and would have been in the power of Russia, even had she accepted the exact terms proposed by the allies, to judge for herself whether a case had arisen which required her to go to war, or which justified her in doing so.

Such a case arose very lately with reference to Schleswig-Holstein. We were bound, under an ancient treaty, to go to

war in the event of the infraction of certain treaties affecting Schleswig-Holstein; but when this case occurred the subject was considered by the Government, the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) being at the time, I believe, Foreign Secretary—who most wisely and properly, not only for this country, but for the interests of Schleswig-Holstein and of Europe, declined to act upon what was represented to be the strict letter of the treaty, and England did not engage in war in consequence of the disputes which then took place. I must say that what seems to me as the most statesmanlike and elevated declaration in the protocols is the statement of Prince Gortchakoff, that the blood of Russia is the property of Russia, and that he will not pledge himself that years hence—it may be even a century hence—the blood of Russia shall be shed in a cause which, when the time arrives, may be one which would be altogether unworthy of such a sacrifice.

With respect to the question of the Christian protectorate, the House will probably recollect that it was represented over and over again by Ministers in this House—it was stated in the speeches of Lord Clarendon in another place—that the proposition of Russia, as conveyed in the Menchikoff note, was intended to transfer the virtual sovereignty of 10,000,000 or 12,000,000 of Ottoman subjects to the Czar. If that were so, the Menchikoff note and all the old protectorate treaties being abolished, surely the House will consider whether the combination of the three propositions—the territorial guarantees, the Christian protectorate, and the Black Sea project—do not give such securities to Turkey as the condition of Turkey will permit. Now the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea, as I think my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) showed very clearly the other evening, is in a certain sense a fact which all the negotiations in the world cannot write off. I see that one of the public journals this morning, commenting upon my hon. Friend's speech, says, 'Yes, truly, the commercial preponderance of

Russia in the Black Sea is a fact which cannot be denied;" and then proceeds to argue that it does not follow that Russia should have a political and naval preponderance. But I do not know any case in which there is a commercial supremacy in a sea like the Black Sea that is not followed by a preponderance of every other kind. The question now is, however, how is that preponderance to cease?

The noble Lord the Member for the City of London referred the other night to a proposition made by the French Government, but which, I think, does not appear at all distinctly in the protocols, with regard to making the Black Sea a neutral sea. I conceive that was so monstrous a proposition, in the present condition of Europe, that I am surprised it should have been entertained for a moment by any sensible man. I supposed it was found so utterly indefensible that it does not appear as a distinct proposition in the protocols. This proposal of making the Black Sea a neutral sea gave place to another project, and it appears to me very like asking Russia, voluntarily or by compulsion, to perform the operation of amputation upon herself. I maintain that the third article as offered to Russia in December last could not mean what the noble Lord offered to Russia at Vienna, because the cessation of preponderance does not mean the transfer of preponderance, but rather the establishment of an equilibrium—not the destruction of an equilibrium and the establishment of preponderance on the other side.

Some hon. Gentlemen talk as if Russia were a Power which you could take to Bow Street, and bind over before some stipendiary magistrate to keep the peace for six months. Russia is a great Power, as England is, and in treating with her you must consider that the Russian Government has to consult its own dignity, its own interests, and public opinion, just as much at least as the Government of this country. Now, what was the proposition of this third article? The proposal was, that Russia should have eight ships; but what was the proposition with regard to her present antagonists? That Turkey

should also have eight ships, that France should have four, and that England should have four; and I believe that in a preceding protocol, which has not been alluded to in this debate, it is proposed that the contracting Powers should have two ships each at the mouth of the Danube, so that if these terms had been agreed upon, Russia would have had eight ships in the Black Sea, while Turkey, France, and England would have had twenty. Now, that is not a mere cessation of a preponderance; it is not the establishment of an equilibrium; it is a transfer of the supremacy of the Black Sea from that country which, if any country should be supreme there, has the best claim—namely, Russia. Besides this, however, Turkey would have had whatever ships she liked in the Bosphorus, and the allies would also have had as many ships as they chose in the Mediterranean and the Levant.

Now, let us for a moment consider the offer with which Russia met this proposal. The first proposition was that of the open Straits, which is disapproved by the hon. Baronet opposite. I am not about to say that this proposition should have been accepted in preference to the other, but I think it is the true interest of Europe, and also of Turkey itself, that the Straits should be thrown open. At any rate, it must be admitted that the preponderance of Russia, in the sense in which we now understand it, would be absolutely destroyed if the Straits were thrown open. Russia made a proposition which appears to me to be highly satisfactory—that such regulations should be made by the Sultan and his Government with regard to the position and duration of the anchorages of ships between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as would preclude the possibility, so far as there were means of doing so, of any inconvenience or danger to Constantinople from the opening of the Straits. If that had been agreed to, all nations would have been entitled to the passage of the Straits, and I believe that all nations would equally have respected the privilege thus granted to them. Now, suppose these Straits,

instead of being one mile wide, had been ten miles wide, what difference would it make to Turkey? If the Straits were ten miles wide they would be open. Turkey would have no right to close them, and European nations would not permit her to pretend to, or to exercise, any such power; but Constantinople would be no more secure then than it would be now with the Straits open, whether they were ten miles wide or one mile wide. If the Straits were open, the consequences to Constantinople and to Turkey appear to me to be precisely the same. Turkey would be equally safe; Turkey would be equally menaced. Our fleets would visit the Black Sea in the course of the season, and the Russian Black Sea fleet, if it chose, would visit the Mediterranean. There would be no sort of pretence for wrangling about the Straits; and the balance of power—if I may use the term—between the fleets of Russia, France, and England, would be probably the best guarantee that could be offered for the security of Constantinople and Turkey, so far as they are in danger of aggression either from the Black Sea or the Mediterranean.

But it is said, the Sultan's sovereignty would be menaced—that he has an undoubted right to close the Straits. I doubt whether that right will be very long maintained; but if it be maintained, and if you are to reject any proposition which interferes with the Sultan's sovereignty, I ask you whether the sovereignty of the Czar is not as dear to him? and whether, if, in negotiations of this kind, you can find any mode of attaining your object without inflicting injury upon either the sovereignty of the Sultan or the Czar, it would not be much more statesmanlike to adopt it, and so to frame your treaties that neither should feel that it was subjected to an indignity, and therefore seek to violate such treaties at the first opportunity? Well, but the second proposition, which I think the hon. Baronet approved, and which I think the noble Lord proposed, was, that the Sultan should open the Straits at will. I ask the House whether that proposition, if accepted,

would not imply that the Sultan could have no other enemy than Russia?—which I think is doubtful. If the Black Sea were open to the West, and the Mediterranean closed to the East, surely that is assuming that the Sultan could have no enemy but Russia. The Sultan could close the Straits to Russia, but the Western Powers could always proceed to the Black Sea. The French plan, in my opinion, exposed Turkey far more to the West than the Russian plan exposed her to the East. Nothing can be more short-sighted than the notion which the noble Lord the Member for London started at the conferences, that Turkey could have no enemy but Russia. In fact, everybody there seemed to be on exceedingly good terms with himself. The Austrian Minister said nobody would suspect Austria—no one could be suspected but Russia. But our experience for many years will tell us that there has been just as much menace from the West as from the East—the rapacity of the West is not less perceptible than that of the East. ['Hear.'] Some one expresses a sentiment in opposition—it is a gentleman who has never read the Blue Books—he does not know that almost the whole of this business began in a threat of the most audacious and insulting character from the Ambassador of France—a threat to order up the French fleet to the Dardanelles, and further to land an expedition in Syria to take possession of Jerusalem and the whole of the Holy Places. Do you mean to tell me, you and the noble Lord himself, who tried to frighten the country with the notion of the French fleet coming to invade England, that the fleet which three years ago threatened England, and more recently threatened the Dardanelles, has for ever abandoned rapacious desires, and that therefore there will never again be a menace against Turkey from France?

I understand, however, there is a very different opinion prevalent upon the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The Emperor of Morocco, a potentate somewhat allied to this country, as I am told his empress is an Irish lady—the

Emperor of Morocco, who is not very well versed in what is going on in this House, has been making inquiries of the most anxious character as to whether the particular guarantee which the noble Lord was going to enter into included the territory of Morocco; and I understand he has not been able to find it out from the most assiduous study of the Gibraltar newspapers. It so happens that the Governor of Gibraltar the noble Lord at the head of the Government corrected me the other night when I called him an irrational man—has issued an ordinance by which he has entirely suppressed the newspaper press in that town and garrison.

Now we come to the question, which of the propositions would be most secure? I was very much struck by an observation which fell from my hon. Colleague (Mr. M. Gibson) in the course of his speech the other night—a point I think very worthy of the attention of the House and of the Government; he said the limitation plan was one which must depend for its efficacy on the will and fidelity of Russia. I am not one of those who believe Russia to be the treacherous and felonious Power which she is described to be by the press of this country, as she is described by the noble Lord to be. I believe the right hon. Baronet the Member for Southwark gave her the same character. Although Russia may not be more treacherous than other Powers, when you are making a bargain with her, it is better you should make the efficacy of the terms depend more on your own vigilance than on her good faith. The noble Lord the Member for London has admitted that the limitation plan is, after all, an inefficient one. He said that Russia might get another ship—perhaps three or four—and when she had doubled the navy permitted to her, perhaps the noble Lord would be writing despatches about it, although I am not sure he would do that. I think it would be holding out a temptation to buy Mr. Scott Russell's great ship as one of the eight ships she is to be allowed to keep by the treaty.

My hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding remarked that Russia might purchase vessels of large size from the United States, and still keep within the prescribed limit; but if this great ship, now building in the Thames, should succeed, as I hope she will, Russia might buy her and send her into the Black Sea. Somebody says she could not go there without passing the Straits, but, as she is built for mercantile purposes, that monster vessel might freely be taken up, and then form one of the eight ships allowed to Russia. Another proposition has been alluded to by the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Sir W. Clay) — that pointed out by the Russian Plenipotentiary — that Russia and Turkey should enter into a friendly treaty between themselves and arrange that point; but the other diplomatists would not allow it, unless it were done under the eyes of the conference and bearing the same features of force and compulsion as their proposal of the limitation possessed. I was astonished to hear the hon. Baronet, as I understood him, say that, even although it could be shown that the Russian propositions were better than our own, he thought the proposition which bore on its face coercion of Russia was most desirable. A more unstatesman-like and immoral view upon a great question between nations I have rarely heard of. [Sir William Clay rose, and was understood to deny the sentiments imputed to him by the hon. Member.] I understood my hon. Friend so. Perhaps he did not mean what I thought he did mean, but that was the conclusion I came to from his argument, and I do not think he will say I entirely misrepresented him. It has, however, been said by the press that, whether we were sincere or not at the conference, Russia was not. Hon. Gentlemen have read in the *Times* and other papers blowing the flames of war, that from first to last Russia was treacherous and insincere. I would put it to the noble Lord the Member for London whether he can say that was the case, for I observe he said, in his speech in this House on the 23rd of January last, in

answer to a question from the hon. Member for Aylesbury, or some other Member—

'My hon. Friend will see that by that act the Russian Plenipotentiary accepted this interpretation as the basis of negotiation, of course reserving to himself the power, when this basis shall have been laid down in a definite article, of making any observations on the part of his Government which he should think proper.'—[*3 Hansard*, cxxxvi. 911.]

Of course the Russian Plenipotentiary, when he accepted it, did so upon the understanding that it was the basis of negotiation and discussion, as no one will deny it was a question capable of being solved in more ways than one, and it was no indication of insincerity for him to refuse the precise mode proposed by the Plenipotentiary for England. With regard to the terms proposed, I should like to read to the House a statement I have on very good authority as to the language which Prince Gortchakoff held at Vienna. The statement I have is not to be found in the protocols, but I believe it may be relied upon as the precise words he used. The noble Lord insisted, as I understand, that it was no indignity to ask Russia to limit the number of her ships in the Black Sea; but I would submit it is precisely the same in principle as if she were asked to limit the amount of her force in the Crimea to four or six regiments. Prince Gortchakoff said—

'To ask from an independent Power that it should limit its force, is to assail its rights of sovereignty on its own territory. It is with a bad grace that they would sustain the rights of the Sultan and wish to attack those of the Emperor of Russia. The proposition to render the Black Sea inaccessible to vessels of war of all nations is so strange (*si bizarre*) that one is astonished to see the fate of nations confided to men such as those who have conceived it. How could it be believed that Russia would consent to give herself up disarmed at the good pleasure of the Napoleons and the Palmerstons, who will be able themselves to have armed forces in the Mediterranean?'

There was no answer to that. If any diplomatist from this country, under the same circumstances as Russia was placed in, had consented to terms such as the noble Lord had endeavoured to force upon Russia—I say, that if he entered the

door of this House, he would be met by one universal shout of execration, and, as a public man, would be ruined for ever.

I wish to ask the House this question—whether it has deliberately made up its mind that this was a proposition which ought to have been imposed upon Russia? If they have ascertained which is the best—and I rather think the general opinion is that the proposition of the Government is the worst; but, assuming that it is not so, and that there may be some little difference—I want to know what that difference is, and if there is any difference which can be measured even by the finest diplomatic and statesmanlike instrument ever invented, I ask, is that difference worth to this country the incalculable calamities which a prolonged war must bring upon us? I am of opinion that, with the territorial guarantee and the abolition of the Christian protectorate, either the terms proposed by the noble Lord or by Prince Gortchakoff would have been as secure for Turkey as it is possible under existing circumstances for Turkey to be by any treaty between the great Powers of Europe. And, recollect that we have been thrown a little off the original proposition, for when that proposition was first agreed to in the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen I am satisfied in my own mind that it meant something very like that which the Russians themselves have proposed.

If we take this first protocol of the conference, and look to the speech made by Count Buol and to the proposition he made, you will find the third article runs in this language: 'The treaty of July 13, 1841, shall be revised with the double object,' and so on. But what is the meaning of revising the treaty of 1841? The treaty has only one object, which is to guarantee to the Turk the right he has claimed since his possession of Constantinople—namely, that the Straits should be closed under the guarantee of the Powers, except in case of war. Therefore, when the Aberdeen Government, of which the noble Lords were Members, originally agreed upon these terms, their object was that the Black Sea should be thrown

open, or, at least, that the closing of the Straits should be relaxed; and I presume that it was not until after it was known that, while Russia had no objection to the opening of the Straits, Turkey was very much opposed to it, that it was found necessary to change the terms and bring them forward in another form. But, surely, if this be so, the House and the Government should be chary indeed of carrying on a prolonged war with Russia, Russia having been willing to accept a proposition made originally by us, and which I believe to be the best for Turkey and for the interests of Europe. If, I say, this be so, was the Government justified in breaking off these negotiations, because that really is the issue which this House is called upon to try? Can they obtain better terms? If the terms are sufficient for Turkey they ought not to ask for better ones. I do not say they may not get better terms. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden), that England and France, if they choose to sacrifice 500,000 men, and to throw away 200,000,000*l.* or 300,000,000*l.* of treasure, may dismember the Russian Empire. But I doubt whether this would give better terms for Turkey—I am sure it would not give better terms for England and France. Now, what has it cost to obtain all this?

And here I must be permitted to say one word with regard to the course taken by those right hon. Gentlemen who have recently taken their seats on this bench, and whose conduct on this question has been the cause of great debate, and of language which I think the state of the case has not wholly justified. I presume it will be admitted that these right hon. Gentlemen at least know the object of the war as well as any other men in this House. I presume, too, that, entertaining as they do a very serious idea of the results of a prolonged war, they are at liberty to come to the conclusion that certain terms, to which they themselves were parties, are sufficient; and if this be the conviction at which they have arrived, surely no Member of this House will say that, because they

were Members of a Cabinet some time ago which went into this war, therefore they should be forbidden to endeavour to avert the inculculable calamities which threaten their country, but should be expected to maintain a show of consistency, for which they must sacrifice everything that an honest man would hold dear. Have these men gained anything in popularity with the country, or even with the Members of this House, by the course they have taken?

I am almost ashamed to say anything in the defence of those who are so capable of explaining and defending their own conduct in this matter; but I may be pardoned if I rejoice that men ranking high as statesmen, powerful by their oratory, distinguished by their long services, have separated themselves from that rash, that inexcusable recklessness which, I say, marks the present Government, and are anxious to deliver their country from the dangers which surround it. My hon. Friends below me—and I am quite sure not one of them will suppose that I speak from the mere wish to oppose them in any way; they are personal friends of mine, and it pains me now to differ from them; but hon. Members seem to think, when they are looking a long way off for the objects to be gained by war, that a man who looks at home is not a friend to his country. Is war the only thing a nation enters upon in which the cost is never to be reckoned? Is it nothing that in twelve months you have sacrificed 20,000 or 30,000 men, who a year ago were your own fellow-citizens, living in your midst, and interested, as you are, in all the social and political occurrences of the day? Is it nothing that, in addition to those lives, a sum of—I am almost afraid to say how much, but 30,000,000*l.* or 40,000,000*l.* will not be beyond the mark—has already been expended? And let the House bear in mind this solemn fact—that the four nations engaged in this war have already lost so many men, that if you were to go from Chelsea to Blackwall, and from Highgate and Hampstead to Norwood, and take every man of

a fighting age and put him to death—if you did this you would not sacrifice a larger number of lives than have already been sacrificed in these twelve months of war.

Your own troops, as you know, have suffered, during a Crimean winter, tortures and horrors which the great Florentine hardly imagined when he wrote his immortal epic. Hon. Members are ready, I know, to say, 'Whose fault is that?' But if our loss has been less than that of the French, less than that of the Turks, and less than that of the Russians, it is fair to assume that, whatever mistakes may have been committed by the Government, the loss in the aggregate would, even under other circumstances, have fallen very little short of that which I have attempted to describe. Are these things to be accounted nothing? We have had for twelve years past a gradual reduction of taxation, and there has been an immense improvement in the physical, intellectual, and moral condition of the people of this country; while for the last two years we have commenced a career of reimposing taxes, have had to apply for a loan, and no doubt, if this war goes on, extensive loans are still in prospect.

Hon. Members may think this is nothing. They say it is a 'low' view of the case. But, these things are the foundation of your national greatness, and of your national duration; and you may be following visionary phantoms in all parts of the world while your own country is becoming rotten within, and calamities may be in store for the monarchy and the nation of which now, it appears, you take no heed. Every man connected with trade knows how much trade has suffered, how much profits in every branch of trade—except in contracts arising out of the war—have diminished, how industry is becoming more precarious and the reward for industry less, how the price of food is raised, and how much there is of a growing pressure of all classes, especially upon the poorest of the people—a pressure which by-and-by—not just now, when the popular frenzy is lashed into fury morning

after morning by the newspapers—[Murmurs]—but I say by-and-by this discontent will grow rapidly, and you (pointing to the Ministerial bench) who now fancy you are fulfilling the behests of the national will, will find yourselves pointed to as the men who ought to have taught the nation better.

I will not enter into the question of the harvest. That is in the hand of Providence, and may Providence grant that the harvest may be as bountiful as it was last year! But the House must recollect that in 1853, only two years ago, there was the worst harvest that had been known for forty years. Prices were very high in consequence. Last year the harvest was the greatest ever known, yet prices have been scarcely lower, and there are not wanting men of great information and of sound judgment who look with much alarm to what may come—I trust it may not come—if we should have, in addition to the calamities of war, calamities arising from a scarcity of food, which may be scarcely less destructive of the peace and comfort of the population of this country.

I will ask the House in this state of things whether they are disposed to place implicit confidence in her Majesty's Ministers? On that (the Opposition) side of the House there is not, I believe, much confidence in the Government; and on this side I suspect there are many men who are wishful that at this critical moment the affairs of the country should be under the guidance of men of greater solidity and of better judgment. I will now point out one or two causes which I think show that I am justified in placing no confidence whatever in her Majesty's Government. Take for example what they have been doing with Austria. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has stated to us that it was of European importance that Hungary should be connected with Austria. The noble Lord the Member for the City of London said the other night it was of essential importance that Austria should be preserved as she is—a great conservative Power in the midst of Europe. Well, but at the same time

this Government has been urging Austria, month after month, to enter into the same ruinous course which they themselves are disposed to pursue. They know perfectly well that if Austria were to join either with Russia on the one hand, or with the Western Powers on the other, in all human probability this great Empire would no longer remain that 'great conservative Power in the midst of Europe,' but would be stripped on the one side of her Italian provinces, and of Hungary on the other; or, if not stripped of these two portions of the Empire, would be plunged into an interminable anarchy which would prove destructive of her power.

What can be more inconsistent than for Ministers to tell us that they wish Austria to be preserved, and, at the same time, to urge her upon a course which they know perfectly well must end in her disruption, and in the destruction of that which they think essential to the balance of power in Europe? We are told, with regard to our other alliance, that it is a very delicate topic. It is a very delicate and a very important topic; but there is another topic still more delicate and important — namely, the future of this country with regard to that alliance. I think we have before now spent 1,000,000,000*l.* sterling, more or less, for the sake of a French dynasty. At this moment there are French armies in Rome, in Athens, in Gallipoli, in Constantinople, and in the Crimea, and the end of all this, I fear, is not yet. It has been repeatedly stated in this House that the people of France are not themselves enthusiastic in favour of this war. I would fain hope, whatever else may happen, that between the people of England and of France an improved and friendly feeling has grown up. But, as far as the war is concerned, your alliance depends on one life. The present dynasty may be a permanent, but it may be an ephemeral one, and I cannot but think that when men are looking forward to prolonged warfare they should at least take into consideration the ground on which they are standing.

Lord Clarendon has told us, with regard to Russia, that Europe was standing on a mine, and did not know it. I do not know that he is much more acute than other people, but I can fancy that Lord Clarendon, by the blunders of his negotiations and the alliances he has endeavoured to form, has placed this country on a mine far more dangerous and destructive than that upon which he thinks Europe was placed by the colossal power of Russia. There is another point I have to touch upon. To me it was really frightful to hear the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord John Russell) tell the House that we are not fighting for ourselves, but for Germany. I recollect one passage among many in the noble Lord's speeches upon this point; and, in looking over what has been said by Ministers, one really wonders that they should have allowed anything of the kind to appear in *Hansard*. On the 17th of February last year the noble Lord said,—

'They (England and France) feel that the cause is one, in the first place, of the independence of Turkey . . . It is to maintain the independence, not only of Turkey, but of Germany and of all European nations.'—[3 *Hansard*, cxxx. 906]

['Hear, hear!'] An hon. Member cheers. What a notion a man must have of the duties of the 27,000,000 of people living in these islands if he thinks they ought to come forward as the defenders of the 60,000,000 of people in Germany, that the blood of England is not the property of the people of England, and that the sacred treasure of the bravery, resolution, and unfaltering courage of the people of England is to be squandered in a contest in which the noble Lord says we have no interest, for the preservation of the independence of Germany, and of the integrity, civilization, and something else, of all Europe!

The noble Lord takes a much better view, as I presume many of us do, of things past than of things present. The noble Lord knows that we once did go to war for all Europe, but then we went to war with nearly all Europe, whereas now

we are going to war in alliance with France only, except the little State of Sardinia, which we have cajoled or coerced into a course which I believe every friend to the freedom of Italy and to Sardinia will live to regret. All the rest of Europe—Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden—take no part in the war, and yet our Ministers have—what I should call, if I were not in this House, the effrontery and audacity to get up and tell us that they are fighting the battle of all Europe, and that all Europe is leagued with us against the colossal power of Russia. Europe in the last war did, for the most part, unite with us. We went to Spain because we were called to go by the patriot Spaniards, but I think the Duke of Wellington has stated, in his despatches, that if he had known how little assistance would be received from them he would not have recommended even that expedition.

But now, not only has all Europe not united with you, but other countries will not even allow their men to fight with you. You pay the Turks to fight their own battles, you enlist men in Germany to fight the battles of Germany, and the persons engaged in Switzerland and Hamburg in enlisting men for you are looked upon with suspicion by the authorities, and I am not sure that some of them have not even been taken into custody. Why, then, should you pretend that all Europe is leagued against Russia, and that you have authority to fight the battles of all Europe against Russia, when the greater part of Europe is standing by apathetically wondering at the folly you are committing? I would appeal to the noble Lord the Member for the Colonies—I beg his pardon, the Member for London—but he has been in so many different positions lately that it is extremely difficult to identify him. I would appeal to the noble Lord, because, however much I differ from him, I have never yet come to the conclusion that he has not at heart the interest of his country, that he is not capable of appreciating a fair argument when it

is laid before him, and that he has not some sense of the responsibility as to the political course he takes, and I would ask him if there be no other world of kingdoms and of nations but that old world of Europe with which the noble Lord is so disposed to entangle this country?

I wish the noble Lord could blot out from his recollection, for a little time, William III, and all the remembrance of what has been called by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) 'the Dutch conquest,' which is supposed to have enthroned the Whig aristocracy in this country. I would ask the noble Lord to do this for to-night—for an hour—for five minutes. There is a country called the United States of America. Only on Tuesday night the very remarkable circumstance occurred—and I think the House will be of opinion that it is one worth notice—of two of those distinguished men being present and listening to the debates in this House who have occupied the position of President of the United States; a position, I venture to say, not lower in honour and dignity than that of any crowned monarch on the surface of the globe. The United States is precisely the country which is running with us the race of power and of greatness. Its population will, I believe, at the next census exceed the population of the United Kingdom; in its manufactures and general industry it is by far the most formidable rival that the great manufacturers of this country now have to contend with; it has, I suppose, ten steamers for one steamer of this country; its magnificent steamships have crossed the Atlantic in a shorter time than the steamships of this country; the finest vessels which are at this moment performing the voyage between England and the Australian colonies have been built in the United States; therefore, in shipbuilding industry the United States not only compete with, but in some respects even excel, this country. Look at our present position and that of the United States.

May I entreat the attention of this House, for I am not

declaiming, I am not making a party attack, I am treating of that which, in my mind, is of vital importance to every family in the kingdom. This year the Chancellor of the Exchequer told you that he must have a sum of 86,000,000*l.* in order to carry on the various departments of your Government, and to defray your vast military expenditure. The United States has at this moment in her Treasury enough, I think, to pay off all her debt. Deduct the whole amount of the expenses of the Government of the United States, not only of the general Government, but also of the thirty independent sovereign States, from the 86,000,000*l.* we are spending, and you will find that at least 70,000,000*l.* will be left, which is, therefore, the sum of taxation that we are paying this year more than the people of the United States.

Some hon. Gentlemen know what it is to run a horse that has been weighted. I heard, the other day, of a horse that won every race in which it started, up to a certain period when it was for the first time weighted. It then lost the race, and it is reported in the annals of the turf that it never won a race afterwards. If that be the case with regard to a horse, it is much more true with regard to a nation. When a nation has gone a step backwards it is difficult to restore it to its position; if another nation has passed it in the race, it is almost impossible for it to regain the ground it has lost. I now speak particularly to hon. Members opposite, for there are, perhaps, more Gentlemen upon that than upon this side of the House in the happy position of owners of vast, productive, beautiful, and, I hope, unencumbered estates in the various parts of the kingdom. We are now about ten days' voyage from the United States, and within ten years we shall probably communicate with that country by telegraph as quickly as we now do with the Crimea. I hope it will be for a much better object. The people of the United States are our people, and there are few families in England which have not friends and relatives connected with or settled in that

country. The inducements for men to remain at home and their attachment to the place of their birth are necessarily to some extent weakened by the facility with which they can now travel almost round the world in a few weeks.

Do you believe that when the capital of the greatest banking-house in Lombard-street can be transferred to the United States on a small piece of paper in one post, that the imposition of 70,000,000*l.* of taxation over and above the taxation of an equal population in the United States will not have the effect of transferring capital from this country to the United States, and, if capital, then trade, population, and all that forms the bone and sinew of this great Empire? I ask hon. Members to remember what fell on a previous evening from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Works. The right hon. Gentleman talked of the war lasting, perhaps, six years with our resources undiminished. Now, nothing is easier than for a Cornish Baronet, possessing I am afraid to say how many thousands a year, a Member of a Cabinet, or for all those who are surrounded with every comfort, to look with the utmost complacency upon the calamities which may befall others not so fortunately situated as themselves. Six years of this war, and our resources undiminished! Why, Sir, six years of this war, at an annual expenditure of 70,000,000*l.*, give 420,000,000*l.* to the side of the United States as against the condition of the people of this country.

Am I, then, talking of trifles? Am I talking to sane men, that it is necessary to bring forward facts like these? I am amazed, when the newspaper press, when public speakers, when Gentlemen on both sides of this House are so ready to listen and to speak upon questions relating to Turkey, to Servia, or to Schamyl, that I cannot get the House of Commons to consider a question so great as the expenditure of 420,000,000*l.*, and when we have to consider if we shall trust that vast issue in the hands of the noble Lords and right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury bench.

I have stated that I have no confidence in the Government, and I will now tell the House another reason for that want of confidence. My hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding, on a previous occasion, treated the right hon. President of the Board of Works very summarily; but I wish to call the attention of the House to what was said by the right hon. Gentleman in 1850, in the debate which then took place upon the foreign policy of the noble Lord now his chief. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman told the House that the foreign policy of the noble Lord now at the head of the Government had made us hated by every party in every nation in Europe; he said that the noble Lord had excited the disaffected to revolt, and, having brought upon them the vengeance of the Governments under which they lived, had then betrayed them. I do not say that this is true, but I state it upon the authority of a Minister now in the Cabinet of the noble Lord; but, whether true or not, I cannot have confidence in the right hon. Gentleman when sitting in a Cabinet to carry out the foreign policy of the noble Lord.

I will take the case of another Minister, and I do not think that when he speaks he will call my observations undeserved. A most distinguished Member of the Government—the Chancellor of the Exchequer—has been twice elected within a very short period, once before and once since his acceptance of office,—I must say that I do not like to see these changes, when a man one night sits on one bench and another night on another,—on the 8th of February, 1855, the right hon. Gentleman, addressing his constituents at Radnor, said:—

'I am not prepared to give my vote in favour of any change in our policy which would attempt to make England a first-rate military Power. It seems to me that it would be little short of madness to attempt any such gigantic undertaking. It is our true wisdom to limit ourselves to that amount of military force which shall enable us to defend our own shores, and to protect our great dependencies abroad. If we can completely defend our own coasts, it appears to me that the objects of our national policy have been fulfilled.'

And then, as if he had in view the language of the noble

Lord at the head of the Government and that of his colleague the Member for London, he proceeded to say,—

'I wish to see a cessation of that inordinate and senseless desire which has been sometimes expressed of late, almost usurping the functions of Providence, that we should go to almost all parts of the world to redress wrong and to see that right is done.'

I say that the right hon. Gentleman had the language of his colleagues in view, and when he speaks he will no doubt admit that such was the case. For what did the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies say when he addressed the baillies and the enthusiastic citizens of Greenock? He said,—

'It is likewise to be considered, and I trust we shall none of us forget it, that this country holds an important position among the nations of the world —that not once, but many times, she has stood forward to resist oppression, to maintain the independence of weaker nations, to preserve to the general family of nations that freedom, that power of governing themselves, of which others have sought to deprive them. I trust that character will not be forgotten, will not be abandoned by a people which is now stronger in means, which is more populous and more wealthy than it ever has been at any former period. This then, you will agree with me, is not the period to abandon any of those duties towards the world, towards the whole of mankind, which Great Britain has hitherto performed.'

Now let us see what the right hon. Gentleman said, after having accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman made a speech, and it was just after the death of the late Emperor of Russia, and, in referring to the new Emperor, he said,—

'If, however, it should please this mighty Potentate to continue in the course of aggression upon which his father had entered, and if our reasonable hopes of a more pacific policy should be disappointed, then let him know that in England he will find a country prepared to maintain its own rights and the rights of other nations.'

Observe, 'the rights of other nations;' and he goes on,—

'A country which, although its army has been placed in a perilous position, and has had to undergo the rigours of a Russian winter, has its resources unimpaired, has its revenue flourishing, has its trade substantially undiminished, has its spirit unbroken, and will be prepared, in case of necessity, to vindicate its own honour, and to maintain the rights and liberties of Europe.'

I wish the House to observe what a complete change there is in the language of the right hon. Gentleman upon these two occasions. Either of the two opinions which he expressed may be right, but both of them cannot be so, and I confess that when I find that a Gentleman says one thing one day, and a month later, when he comes into office, the exact opposite, I do not think that I can be expected to have that confidence in him as to be willing to entrust him with the vast issues depending on the war.

I will now refer to a colleague of the right hon. Gentleman —one who has also distinguished himself—I mean the First Lord of the Admiralty. That right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood) has said nothing upon the subject of the war, and I have felt that he must entertain great doubts as to its policy; but, not very long ago, he also addressed his constituents, and indulged in very hostile and insulting language towards 'our great and magnanimous ally;' but he, too, has changed his mind; and not long ago he went down by express train to Folkestone or Dover—I forget which—to meet in the most friendly, and probably in the most humble manner, the very potentate whom he had formerly abused.

If I have disposed of these Gentlemen and shown why I can have no confidence in them, are there any better reasons why I should have confidence in those two noble Lords who were the active and restless spirits in the Cabinet which the noble Lord the Member for London overthrew? I regard those noble Lords as responsible for the policy of this war. I am bound to suppose that they acted in accordance with their conscientious convictions; but, still, the fact of their having embarked in that policy is no reason why I should have confidence in them. But, are those two noble Lords men in whom the House and country ought to place implicit confidence? What of late could be more remarkable than the caprices of the noble Lord the Member for London? When that noble Lord was in the

Government of Lord Aberdeen he went to Greenock, I think to Bedford, and certainly to Bristol—and, in fact, he took every opportunity which offered itself of bringing himself before the public; and, with his power of speech, his long experience, and eminent character, did his utmost to stimulate the feelings of the people to a policy which I believe to be destructive, and which I think the majority of this House in calm moments does not believe to have been the wisest which could have been pursued. It certainly appears to me to be unjustifiable that, while Lord Aberdeen was honestly endeavouring to bring the negotiations to a peaceful conclusion, the noble Lord was taking a course which rendered statesmanship valueless in conducting the foreign policy of the nation. The noble Lord, however, at last brought his conduct to a climax. The hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) came forward as a little David with sling and stone—weapons which he did not even use, but at the sight of which the Whig Goliah went howling and vanquished to the back benches

I am afraid, Sir, to trust myself to speak of the conduct of the noble Lord on that occasion. I presume that we shall have to wait for the advent of that Somersetshire historian, whose coming the noble Lord expects, before we know whether his conduct on that occasion was, what some persons still call it, treachery to his chief, or whether it arose from that description of moral cowardice which in every man is the death of all true statesmanship. But in the year 1852 the noble Lord the Member for London gave me a strong reason why I should feel no confidence in his present chief. The House will remember that he then ejected the present First Minister under whom he now serves from the Cabinet of which he himself was then the head, and in the explanation which he made to the House, he told us that men like Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne, men of age, of authority, and experience, had been able in some degree to control his noble Friend, but,

that he being younger than the noble Lord, and having been a shorter time on the political stage, had found it difficult to control him. The description which the noble Lord might give of his colleague is a little like that which we occasionally see given of a runaway horse—that he got the bit between his teeth, and there was no holding him.

The noble Lord the Member for London was the captain of the State vessel, and the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton was the mate. But how is it now? The noble Lord the Member for the City of London has accepted the position of mate in the most perilous times, in the most tempestuous weather, and he goes to sea with no chart on a most dangerous and interminable voyage, and with the very reckless captain whom he would not trust as mate. Sir, the noble Lord the Member for London has made a defence of his conduct at the Conferences at Vienna. I am willing to give him credit that he did then honestly intend peace; but I do think that when he goes again, and on such a journey, he will do well to leave some of his historic knowledge behind him. They were indeed historic fancies. There is nothing to me so out of place as the comparison which the noble Lord made between the limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea and the destruction of Dunkirk, or between the condition of the Black Sea and that of the lakes of North America. The noble Lord can never have heard of the Falls of Niagara. If there were Falls like them between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean the cases would be somewhat similar, for the Russian fleet in the Black Sea would not then be exposed to the assaults of the vast navies of England or France. When I allude to this subject, I am reminded of that Welshman whom Shakspeare immortalised, who found some analogy between a river in Macedon and a river in Monmouth. He knew the name of the river in Monmouth, and he did not know the name of the river in Macedon, but he insisted upon the analogy between them because there were salmon in both.

Well, Sir, I now come to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I do not complain that he is at the head of the Government. The noble Lord the Member for the City of London had thrown everything into such inextricable and unlooked-for confusion that any one next door to him must necessarily occupy the place. But I cannot have confidence in the noble Viscount, because I cannot but recollect that in 1850 he received the condemnation of his foreign policy in the other House of Parliament; and in a speech which I shall never forget, the last and one of the best ever delivered by the greatest statesman of the time, he received a similar condemnation, and the noble Viscount only escaped condemnation by a direct vote of this House by the energetic defence of the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, and by the stress laid upon many Members on this side of the House. But only six weeks after this the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) presented to the noble Viscount a letter from his Sovereign, which I cannot but think must have cost him much pain, and to which I will not refer further, except to say that I do not know how it is possible, if the contents of that letter were true, that either the noble Lord or the House can be called upon to place implicit confidence in the noble Lord the leader of the Government.

I have observed the noble Viscount's conduct ever since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, and the noble Viscount will excuse me if I state the reason why I have often opposed him. The reason is, that the noble Viscount treats all these questions, and the House itself, with such a want of seriousness that it has appeared to me that he has no serious, or sufficiently serious, conviction of the important business that so constantly comes before this House. I regard the noble Viscount as a man who has experience, but who with experience has not gained wisdom—as a man who has age, but who, with age, has not the gravity of age, and who, now occupying the highest seat of power, has—and I say it with

pain—not appeared influenced by a due sense of the responsibility that belongs to that elevated position.

We are now in the hands of these two noble Lords. They are the authors of the war. It lies between them that peace was not made at Vienna upon some proper terms. And whatever disasters may be in store for this country or for Europe, they will lie at the doors of these noble Lords. Their influence in the Cabinet must be supreme; their influence in this House is necessarily great; and their influence with the country is greater than that of any other two statesmen now upon the stage of political life in England. They have carried on the war. They have, however, not yet crippled Russia, although it is generally admitted that they have almost destroyed Turkey. They have not yet saved Europe in its independence and civilization,—they have only succeeded in convulsing it. They have not added to the honour and renown of England, but they have placed the honour and renown of this country in peril. The country has been, I am afraid, the sport of their ancient rivalry, and I should be very sorry if it should be the victim of the policy which they have so long advocated.

There is only one other point upon which I will trouble the House, if it will give me its attention. These Ministers—the right hon. Member for Southwark, the Commissioner of the Board of Works, especially, and evidently the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I am afraid many other Members of this House—seem to think little of taxes. Some Members of this House seem to have no patience with me if I speak of the cost of the war; but I am obliged to ask its attention to this point. I recollect reading in the life of Necker, that an aristocratic lady came to him when he was Finance Minister of Louis XVI. and asked him to give her 1,000 crowns from the public treasury—not an unusual demand in those days. Necker refused to give the money. The lady started with astonishment—she had an eye to the vast funds of the State,

and she asked, 'What can 1,000 crowns be to the King?' Necker's answer was, 'Madam! 1,000 crowns are the taxes of a whole village!'

I ask hon. Gentlemen what are the taxes of a whole village, and what they mean? They mean bareness of furniture, of clothing, and of the table in many a cottage in Lancashire, in Suffolk, and in Dorsetshire. They mean an absence of medical attendance for a sick wife, an absence of the school pence of three or four little children—hopeless toil to the father of a family, penury through his life, a cheerless old age, and, if I may quote the language of a poet of humble life, at last—'the little bell tolled hastily for the pauper's funeral.' That is what taxes mean. The hon. Member for Dorsetshire spoke the other night in a manner rather flippant and hardly respectful to some of us on this question. But the labourers of Dorsetshire as well as the weavers and spinners of Lancashire are toiling, and must toil harder, longer, and with smaller remuneration for every single 100*l.* that you extract in taxes from the people in excess of what is necessary for the just requirements of the Exchequer of the country. I hope I may be permitted to treat the question on this ground, and I ask the House to recollect that when you strike down the children in the cottage you attack also the children in the palace. If you darken the lives and destroy the hopes of the humble dwellers of the country, you also darken the prospects of those children the offspring of your Queen, in whom are bound up so much of the interests and so much of the hopes of the people of this country. If I defend, therefore, the interests of the people on this point, I do not the less defend the permanence of the dignity of the Crown.

We on this bench are not willing to place ourselves alongside of noble Lords who are for carrying on this war with no definite object and for an indefinite period, but are ready to take our chance of the verdict of posterity whether they or we more deserve the character of statesmen in the course we have

taken on this question. The House must know that the people are misled and bewildered, and that if every man in this House, who doubts the policy that is being pursued, would boldly say so in this House and out of it, it would not be in the power of the press to mislead the people as it has done for the last twelve months. If they are thus misled and bewildered, is it not the duty of this House to speak with the voice of authority in this hour of peril? We are the depositaries of the power and the guardians of the interests of a great nation and of an ancient monarchy. Why should we not fully measure our responsibility? Why should we not disregard the small-minded ambition that struggles for place? and why should we not, by a faithful, just, and earnest policy, restore, as I believe we may, tranquillity to Europe and prosperity to the country so dear to us?

# LETTER OF JOHN BRIGHT

## TO ABSALOM WATKIN

## ON THE RUSSIAN WAR.

[This letter was originally published with notes containing extracts from those authorities which confirmed the writer's views. The text of these notes has been omitted, but the references have been retained. It has been thought desirable to reprint this letter, as explaining the policy which Mr. Bright thought it his duty to recommend—a policy which was as wise and just as it was unfortunately unpopular.—J. E. T. R.]

[Mr. Absalom Watkin, of Manchester, having invited Mr. Bright to a meeting about to be held in that city on behalf of the Patriotic Fund, and having stated that in his opinion the present war was justified by the authority of *Vattel*, Mr. Bright replied in the subjoined letter.]

I THINK, on further consideration, you will perceive that the meeting on Thursday next would be a most improper occasion for a discussion as to the justice of the war. Just or unjust, the war is a fact, and the men whose lives are miserably thrown away in it have clearly a claim upon the country, and especially upon those who, by the expression of opinions favourable to the war, have made themselves responsible for it. I cannot, therefore, for a moment appear to discourage the liberality of those who believe the war to be just, and whose utmost generosity, in my opinion, will make but a wretched return for the ruin they have brought upon hundreds of families.

With regard to the war itself, I am not surprised at the difference between your opinion and mine, if you decide a question of this nature by an appeal to *Vattel*. The 'law of nations' is not my law, and at best it is a code full of confusion and contradictions, having its foundation on custom, and not on a higher morality; and on custom which has always been determined by the will of the strongest. It may be a question of some interest whether

the first crusade was in accordance with the law and principles of *Vattel;* but whether the first crusade was just, and whether the policy of the crusades was a wise policy, is a totally different question. I have no doubt that the American war was a just war according to the principles laid down by writers on the 'law of nations,' and yet no man in his senses in this country will now say that the policy of George III. towards the American colonies was a wise policy, or that war a righteous war The French war, too, was doubtless just according to the same authorities, for there were fears and anticipated dangers to be combatted, and law and order to be sustained in Europe; and yet few intelligent men now believe the French war to have been either necessary or just. You must excuse me if I refuse altogether to pin my faith upon *Vattel*. There have been writers on international law who have attempted to show that private assassination and the poisoning of wells were justifiable in war: and perhaps it would be difficult to demonstrate wherein these horrors differ from some of the practices which are now in vogue. I will not ask you to mould your opinion on these points by such writers, nor shall I submit my judgment to that of *Vattel*.

The question of this present war is in two parts—first, was it necessary for us to interfere by arms in a dispute between the Russians and the Turks; and secondly, having determined to interfere, under certain circumstances, why was not the whole question terminated when Russia accepted the Vienna note? The seat of war is three thousand miles away from us. We had not been attacked—not even insulted in any way. Two independent Governments had a dispute, and we thrust ourselves into the quarrel. That there was some ground for the dispute is admitted by the four Powers in the proposition of the Vienna note[1] But for the English Minister at Constantinople and the Cabinet at home the dispute would have settled itself, and the last note of Prince Menchikoff would have been accepted, and no human being can point out any material difference between that note and the Vienna note, afterwards agreed upon and recommended by the Governments of England, France, Austria and Prussia. But our Government would not allow the dispute to be settled. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe held private interviews with the Sultan—did his utmost to alarm him—insisted on his rejection of all terms of accommodation with Russia, and promised him the armed assistance of England if war should arise[2].

[1] Colonel Rose to Lord John Russell, March 7, 1853—Blue Book, part i. p. 87. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, April 9 and May 22, 1853—Ibid. part i. pp. 117 and 135. Lord John Russell to Sir G. H. Seymour, February 9, 1853—Eastern Papers, part v. p. 8. Earl of Clarendon to Sir G. H. Seymour, April 5, 1853—Ibid. part v. p. 22. Lord Carlisle's Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters, p. 181.

[2] Lord Stratford to the Earl of Clarendon, May 19, 1853. See, however a despatch of May 10—Blue Book, part i. p. 213.

The Turks rejected the Russian note, and the Russians crossed the Pruth, occupying the Principalities as a 'material guarantee.' I do not defend this act of Russia: it has always appeared to me impolitic and immoral; but I think it likely it could be well defended out of *Vattel*, and it is at least as justifiable as the conduct of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston in 1850, when they sent ten or twelve ships of war to the Piræus, menacing the town with a bombardment if the dishonest pecuniary claims made by Don Pacifico were not at once satisfied[1].

But the passage of the Pruth was declared by England and France and Turkey not to be a *casus belli*. Negotiations were commenced at Vienna, and the celebrated Vienna note was drawn up. This note had its origin in Paris[2], was agreed to by the Conference at Vienna, ratified and approved by the Cabinets of Paris and London[3], and pronounced by all these authorities to be such as would satisfy the honour of Russia, and at the same time be compatible with the 'independence and integrity' of Turkey and the honour of the Sultan. Russia accepted this note at once[4], —accepted it, I believe, by telegraph, even before the precise words of it had been received in St. Petersburgh[5]. Everybody thought the question now settled; a Cabinet Minister assured me we should never hear another word about it; 'the whole thing is at an end,' he said, and so it appeared for a moment. But the Turk refused the note which had been drawn up by his own arbitrators, and which Russia had accepted[6]. And what did the Ministers say then, and what did their organ, the *Times*, say? They said it was merely a difference about words; it was a pity the Turk made any difficulty, but it would soon be settled[7]. But it was not settled, and why not? It is said that the Russian Government put an improper construction on the Vienna note. But it is unfortunate for those who say this, that the Turk placed precisely the same construction upon it; and further, it is upon record that the French Government advised the Russian Government to accept it, on the

[1] Count Nesselrode to Baron Brunnow, February, 1850.

[2] Earl of Westmoreland to Lord Clarendon, July 25, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 19.

[3] Earl of Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, August 2, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 27. Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon, August 4, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 37.

[4] Sir G. H. Seymour to the Earl of Clarendon, August 5, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 43. Count Nesselrode, August 6, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 46.

[5] Sir G. H. Seymour to Lord Clarendon, August 12, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 50. Count Nesselrode to Baron Meyendorff, September 7, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 101.

[6] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, August 13, 1853—Blue Book, part iv. p. 69. Lord Stratford to the Earl of Clarendon, August 14, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 71.

[7] Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon, from Paris, September 2, 1853. Blue Book, part iv. p. 82. Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, September 10, 1853. Ibid. part iv. p. 95. The *Times*, September 17, 1853.

ground that 'its general sense differed in nothing from the sense of the proposition of Prince Menchikoff[1].' It is, however, easy to see why the Russian Government should, when the Turks refused the award of their own arbitrators, re-state its original claim, that it might not be damaged by whatever concession it had made in accepting the award, and this is evidently the explanation of the document issued by Count Nesselrode, and about which so much has been said. But, after this, the Emperor of Russia spoke to Lord Westmoreland on the subject at Olmutz, and expressed his readiness to accept the Vienna note, with any clause which the Conference might add to it, explaining and restricting its meaning[2]; and he urged that this should be done at once, as he was anxious that his troops should re-cross the Pruth before winter[3]. It was in this very week that the Turks summoned a grand council, and, contrary to the advice of England and France, determined on a declaration of war[4].

Now, observe the course taken by our Government. They agreed to the Vienna note; not fewer than five Members of this Cabinet have filled the office of Foreign Secretary, and therefore may be supposed capable of comprehending its meaning: it was a note drawn up by the friends of Turkey, and by arbitrators self-constituted on behalf of Turkey; they urged its acceptance on the Russian Government, and the Russian Government accepted it; there was then a dispute about its precise meaning, and Russia agreed, and even proposed that the arbitrators at Vienna should amend it, by explaining it, and limiting its meaning, so that no question of its intention should henceforth exist. But, the Turks having rejected it, our Government turned round, and declared the Vienna note, their own note, entirely inadmissible, and defended the conduct of the Turks in having rejected it. The Turks declared war, against the advice of the English and French Governments[5] —so, at least, it appears from the Blue Books; but the moment war was declared by Turkey, our Government openly applauded it. England, then, was committed to the war. She had promised

[1] Earl of Clarendon to the Earl of Westmoreland, July 25, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 1. Count Nesselrode's Memorandum of March 2, 1854, in the *Journal des Débats*.

[2] Lord Westmoreland to Lord Clarendon, September 28, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 129. Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon, October 4, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 131. Lord Clarendon to Lord Cowley, October 7, 1853. Ibid. part ii. p. 140. Lord Clarendon to Lord A. Loftus. Ibid. part ii. p. 132.

[3] Earl of Westmoreland, September 14, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 106.

[4] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, September 26, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 130. M. Drouyn de Lhuys to Count Walewski, October 4, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 136.

[5] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, September 20, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. pp. 149, 151. Lord Clarendon, October 24, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 131. Lord Stratford, November 17, 1853—Ibid. part ii. pp. 171, 181. Lord Stratford. Ibid. part ii. p. 288. Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford, November 8, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 219.

armed assistance to Turkey—a country without government[1], and whose administration was at the mercy of contending factions; and incapable of fixing a policy for herself, she allowed herself to be dragged on by the current of events at Constantinople. She 'drifted,' as Lord Clarendon said, exactly describing his own position, into the war, apparently without rudder and without compass.

The whole policy of our Government in this matter is marked with an imbecility perhaps without example. I will not say they intended a war from the first, though there are not wanting many evidences that war was the object of at least a section of the Cabinet. A distinguished Member of the House of Commons said to a friend of mine, immediately after the accession of the present Government to office, 'You have a war Ministry, and you will have a war.' But I leave this question to point out the disgraceful feebleness of the Cabinet, if I am to absolve them from the guilt of having sought occasion for war. They promised the Turk armed assistance on conditions, or without conditions. They, in concert with France, Austria, and Prussia, took the original dispute out of the hands of Russia and Turkey, and formed themselves into a court of arbitration in the interests of Turkey; they made an award, which they declared to be safe and honourable for both parties; this award was accepted by Russia and rejected by Turkey; and they then turned round upon their own award, declared it to be 'totally inadmissible,' and made war upon the very country whose Government, at their suggestion and urgent recommendation, had frankly accepted it. At this moment England is engaged in a murderous warfare with Russia, although the Russian Government accepted her own terms of peace, and has been willing to accept them in the sense of England's own interpretation of them ever since they were offered; and at the same time England is allied with Turkey, whose Government rejected the award of England, and who entered into the war in opposition to the advice of England. Surely, when the Vienna note was accepted by Russia, the Turks should have been prevented from going to war, or should have been allowed to go to war at their own risk.

I have said nothing here of the fact that all these troubles have sprung out of the demands made by France upon the Turkish Government, and urged in language more insulting than any which has been shown to have been used by Prince Menchikoff[2]. I have said nothing of the diplomatic war which has been raging for many

[1] Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford—Blue Book, part i. pp. 81, 82. Lord Stratford to M. E. Pisani, June 22, 1853—Ibid. part i. p. 383. The same to the same, July 4—Ibid. part i. pp. 383, 384.

[2] Col. Rose to the Earl of Malmesbury, November 20, 1852—Blue Book, part i. p. 49. Lord J. Russell to Lord Cowley, January 28, 1853—Ibid. part i. p. 67.

years past in Constantinople, and in which England has been behind no other Power in attempting to subject the Porte to foreign influences[1]. I have said nothing of the abundant evidence there is that we are not only at war with Russia, but with all the Christian population of the Turkish Empire, and that we are building up our Eastern policy on a false foundation—namely, on the perpetual maintenance of the most immoral and filthy of all despotisms over one of the fairest portions of the earth which it has desolated, and over a population it has degraded but has not been able to destroy. I have said nothing of the wretched delusion that we are fighting for civilization in supporting the Turk against the Russian and against the subject Christian population of Turkey. I have said nothing about our pretended sacrifices for freedom in this war, in which our great and now dominant ally is a monarch who, last in Europe, struck down a free constitution, and dispersed by military violence a national Representative Assembly.

My doctrine would have been non-intervention in this case. The danger of the Russian power was a phantom[2]; the necessity of permanently upholding the Mahometan rule in Europe is an absurdity. Our love for civilization, when we subject the Greeks and Christians to the Turks, is a sham; and our sacrifices for freedom, when working out the behests of the Emperor of the French and coaxing Austria to help us, is a pitiful imposture. The evils of non intervention were remote and vague, and could neither be weighed nor described in any accurate terms. The good we can judge something of already, by estimating the cost of a contrary policy. And what is that cost? War in the north and south of Europe, threatening to involve every country of Europe. Many, perhaps fifty millions sterling, in the course of expenditure by this country alone, to be raised from the taxes of a people whose extrication from ignorance and poverty can only be hoped for from the continuance of peace. The disturbance of trade throughout the world, the derangement of monetary affairs, and difficulties and ruin to thousands of families. Another year of high prices of food, notwithstanding a full harvest in England, chiefly because war interferes with imports, and we have declared our principal foreign food-growers to be our enemies. The loss of human life to an enormous extent. Many thousands of our own countrymen have already perished of pestilence and in the field; and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of English families will be plunged into sorrow, as a part of the penalty to be paid for the folly of the nation and its rulers.

[1] Blue Book—Correspondence respecting the Condition of Protestants in Turkey, 1841-51 pp. 5-8.

[2] 'There never has been a great State whose power for external aggression has been more overrated than Russia. She may be impregnable within her own boundaries BUT SHE IS NEARLY POWERLESS FOR ANY PURPOSE OF OFFENCE.'—*Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons*, 1853.

When the time comes for the 'inquisition for blood,' who shall answer for these things? You have read the tidings from the Crimea; you have, perhaps, shuddered at the slaughter; you remember the terrific picture,—I speak not of the battle, and the charge, and the tumultuous excitement of the conflict, but of the field after the battle—Russians, in their frenzy or their terror, shooting Englishmen who would have offered them water to quench their agony of thirst; Englishmen, in crowds, rifling the pockets of the men they had slain or wounded, taking their few shillings or roubles, and discovering among the plunder of the stiffening corpses images of the 'Virgin and the Child.' You have read this, and your imagination has followed the fearful details. This is war, —every crime which human nature can commit or imagine, every horror it can perpetrate or suffer; and this it is which our Christian Government recklessly plunges into, and which so many of our countrymen at this moment think it patriotic to applaud! You must excuse me if I cannot go with you. I will have no part in this terrible crime. My hands shall be unstained with the blood which is being shed. The necessity of maintaining themselves in office may influence an administration; delusions may mislead a people; *Vattel* may afford you a law and a defence; but no respect for men who form a Government, no regard I have for 'going with the stream,' and no fear of being deemed wanting in patriotism, shall influence me in favour of a policy which, in my conscience, I believe to be as criminal before God as it is destructive of the true interest of my country.

I have only to ask you to forgive me for writing so long a letter. You have forced it from me, and I would not have written it did I not so much appreciate your sincerity and your good intentions towards me.

Believe me to be, very sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

*October* 29.

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